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ABSTRACT

The mass media studies section of the proceedings includes the following 14 papers: "Media Use, Political Activity and the 'Climate of Opinion'" (Robert L. Stevenson and William J. Gonzenbach); "Seeing Is Believing: News as Cultural Ritual in Times of Disaster" (Sandra L. Haarsager); "Creativity and Creative Control in the Work of American Music Radio Announcers" (Steven O. Shields); "Communications and Cultural Survival: Satellite Television in the Alaskan and Canadian Arctic" (Mick Mulcrone); "Obstacles to Media Agenda-Setting" (Wayne Wanta and Mahmoud Mahmoud); "The Politics of Broadcast Deregulation: Beyond Krasnow, Longley, and Terry's 'Broadcast Policy-Making System'" (Haeryon Kim); "Priming Citizens' Vote Choices: The Effects of Campaign News" (Caroline Schooler); "Routine Newswork and the What-a-Story: A Case Study of Organizational Adaptation" (Dan Berkowitz); "Media Strategies: A Study of Two Presidencies" (Francis E. Cheslik); "Setting the Media's Agenda: A Power Balance Perspective" (Stephen D. Reese); "News Coverage of Candidate Morality: Who Uses It and Why" (Judith M. Buddenbaum); "Religion and Mass Media Use for Voting Decision during the 1988 Presidential Election Campaign" (Judith M. Buddenbaum); "Concentration in Local Television Markets" (Benjamin J. Bates); and "In-Depth Coverage and Commentary in Local Television News" (James M. Bernstein and Stephen Lacy). (SR)

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Media Use, Political Activity and the "Climate of Opinion"

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Abstract

This paper examines two research questions concerning Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence Theory: do media exposure, functional use of the mass media and orientation factors influence accuracy of perception of the climate of opinion, and do media exposure and real/perceived perceptions of the climate of opinion influence hypothetical behavior about AIDS and actual behavior supporting a political choice. The study, which analyzes data from two statewide North Carolina surveys with logit models, indicates generally weak relationships between media exposure and functional use of the media and accuracy of perception of the climate of opinion. The study does indicate strong support that attention and subjective perceptions of opinion are related to estimations of opinion shifts. It also indicates strong support that estimations of opinion shifts are related to speaking out; yet, it indicates conflicting evidence about measures of accuracy and consonance and speaking out, indicating the possibility of projection effects.

Media Use, Political Activity, and the "Climate of Opinion"

Introduction and Purpose

Noelle-Neumann's conceptualization of the "climate of opinion" and its central role in a mass-effects theory of a media-directed "spiral of silence" continue to influence communication research around the world.[1]

While most of the controversy surrounding the spiral of silence has focused on the macro-level political aspects, most of the research has been done at the other end, on the individual-level relationships between willingness to speak publicly and perceptions of the climate of opinion. The typical study correlates assertions of willingness to speak out publicly on a controversial issue with assessments of majority opinion on the issue. Two issues that have not received significant attention are linkages between the climate of opinion and actual public behavior and between climate of opinion and media use. In this paper, we use two surveys of North Carolina adults to assess these issues of this innovative and provocative assessment a "powerful effects" theory of media influence.

The Spiral of Silence

Noelle-Neumann begins with an individual-level "fear of isolation" and the tendency to yield to group pressures demonstrated by Asch.[2] Noelle-Neumann argues that we get our cues from the mass media. The "climate of opinion" includes an assessment of the distribution of opinion on a controversial public issue at the moment and an assessment of its dynamic, that is, whether one side or the other is gaining or losing strength.

Noelle-Neumann also argues for several contingent conditions:

> 1. The element of publicness. The theses of the concept of the spiral of silence refer to behavior in public, publicly visible behavior, bearing witness, speaking coran publico, before the "public eye."
> 2. The theses refer to loaded topics with a strong emotional component (persons or issues). A threat of isolation only exists for controversial, morally loaded topics ...
> 3. The mass media have such a strong influence on the spiral of silence that this factor must be included in any analysis.
> 4. Early and late stages in the process of changing public opinion are subject to the special conditions which are described by the terms "avant-garde" and "hard core."[3]

The influence of the media – where the climate of opinion becomes the spiral of silence – is in presenting a distorted picture of reality, which inhibits those who see themselves in a minority from speaking out and emboldens those who find themselves in the media-defined majority. Fear of isolation prompts those dissonant with the media-reality to adjust their real opinions to reduce discrepancy. This, in turn, may give impetus to media to adjust their version of reality again. Theoretically, the side of the issue supported by the media gains momentum as it accelerates up the spiral, while the other side, which may have been the majority view in the beginning, disappears into the black hole at the vortex of the spiral.

Most of the tests of the spiral of silence have focused on the relationship between climate of opinion, that is, whether one sees himself or herself as part of an increasing/decreasing majority/minority, and willingness to speak publicly in support of his or her opinion. On the whole, the correlations are in the directions predicted by the theory, although the range of issues to which the theory applies is not clear. Noelle-Neumann argues that the theory applies only to emotional, morally loaded issues, but the theory was developed in election studies. A test of 15 topics in Japan, China, and South Korea did not produce any clear evidence of differentiation between emotional and non-emotional issues.[4]

Little attention has been given to the links between opinion and media content or media use. Most of the linkages in the full presentation of the theory are indirect.[5] Noelle-Neumann presents surveys of German journalists showing them more liberal and more activist than the general public. Comparative studies of German journalists show them more committed to an advocacy role than their British or American colleagues.[6] The question whether this translates into a leftist/activist bias in news coverage is not immediately answered from this indirect evidence. The same problem arises in the United States. The Lichter and Rothman study documents the liberalism of elite journalists, but professionalism and probably conservative organizational bias act as a deterrent to deliberate imposition of personal views into reporting or consistent ideological bias in media content.[7]

The final issue concerns the media component of the theory. In recent years, the theory has inspired a number of innovative studies of macro-level media influence in Germany. Kepplinger and colleagues indicate that poll ratings throughout Chancellor Helmut Kohl's public life were linked to his media coverage with time lag as a test factor; however the uniform consistency of German coverage are at odds with most quantitative analyses of American media.[8]

Noelle-Neumann has recently used media coverage to explain why, in some cases, holders of the minority opinion in circumstances in which they knew they were in the minority were still more willing to speak out than the majority. She argues that the discrepancy can be explained by media reporting that is consistently supportive of the minority view.[9]

This concern introduces a distinction that few of the spiral of silence studies have dealt with: the distinction between "real" public opinion and what one thinks is public opinion. If "media reality" is a reasonable approximation of "social reality," we ought to be able to estimate whether we are in a majority or minority and whether dominant opinion is moving toward us or away from us. The spiral of silence assumes that it is the case. Research suggests this may not be true.[10] The body of work on selectivity processes -- selective exposure, attention, perception, memory, etc. -- show the remarkable ability of all of us to see in the media what we want to see. The phenomenon is most visible in the last days of a political campaign among losing candidates and their supporters but operates universally. Salmon and Kline call for research in the spiral of silence to examine knowledge of issues.[11] Related to this is Weaver's concept of need for orientation in agenda-setting theory. Those with high issue relevance and high uncertainty about an issue have a high need for orientation and are more vulnerable to agenda-setting effects.[12] At a minimum, the spiral of silence theory should distinguish between observer-oriented definitions of majority and minority opinions and individual-defined considerations, which are probably a better basis for predicting behavior.

Another major but untested link between the spiral of silence and the news media is whether most people accurately gauge public opinion. The phrase "pluralistic ignorance" was coined to describe the phenomenon that most people on most issues don't really know what the rest of the community or country thinks.[13] If pluralistic ignorance is the rule, then the potential for spiral of silence influence is reduced.

A final methodological problem with the original formulation of the spiral of silence was the reliance on projective questions asking respondents what they would do under certain circumstances. While it is difficult to bring the power of a good experiment to bear on the spiral of silence, it can be tested in the context of actual behavior as well as hypothetical what-if situations.

Our goal in this paper is address two research questions:

1. Do media exposure, functional use of mass media and orientation factors influence accuracy of perception on the climate of opinion?
2. Do media exposure and real/perceived perceptions of the climate of opinion influence willingness to express one's political views?

Data and Method

The surveys

The data for this study come from two statewide surveys of North Carolina. Both are part of the Carolina Poll, a telephone survey carried out each semester by the School of Journalism and the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The surveys follow the same general procedures. Numbers are selected by random digit dialing technique; respondents, 18 and older, within each household are selected according to the "next birthday." Since we are interested in correlations rather than estimates of population parameters, this paper uses the original, unweighted responses.

Surveys carried out in the fall of 1987 and fall of 1988 are used in the analysis. The 1987 survey included 598 respondents and the 1988 survey included 883 respondents. The 1987 survey's focal question was whether children infected with the HIV (AIDS) virus should be permitted to attend public school. The survey came just after the controversy in Florida in which three boys who had contracted the virus through blood transfusions were objects of violent protest from parents of other children. The fall 1988 survey was done the week before the presidential election in November.

The Models: Independent and Dependent Variables

In this study, we create seven models, four of which relate to the first research question and three of which relate to the second research question. The dependent variables are all treated as dichotomous variables, i.e the don't know responses are excluded, in order to examine the extreme positions of the variables with the probit procedure with the logistic model specification in SAS PC+; the independent variables are categorical or continuous.

In regard to the first research question we create a different dependent measure for each of the four models. Model 1's dependent variable is: "Should children with AIDS be allowed to attend public school: Do you think they should be allowed or should not be allowed?"(Table 1a). Model 2's dependent variable, subjective accuracy, measures whether respondents agreed or disagreed with with the respondent's opinion about allowing children with AIDS to attend public school: "Do you think most people in your community agree with your point of view or disagree with your point of view?"(Table 1b). Model 3's dependent variable, objective accuracy, combines the respondent's position about whether children with AIDS should be allowed in school and the respondent's assessment of public opinion (Table 1c). If the respondent thinks children with AIDS should be allowed in school, and the respondent thinks he or she is of the majority opinion, or if the respondent thinks children with AIDS should not be allowed in school and the respondent thinks he or she is of the minority opinion, then the respondent is objectively accurate. If the respondent thinks children with AIDS should not be allowed in school, and the respondent thinks he or she is of the majority opinion, or if the respondent thinks children with AIDS should not be allowed in school, and the respondent thinks he or she is of the minority opinion, then the respondent is objectively inaccurate. Model 4's dependent variable is: "Do you think your point of view on AIDS (whether children with AIDS should be allowed in school) is gaining strength or losing strength?"(Table 1d).

Table 1. Dependent Variables for Models 1-4

Table 1a (Model 1). Should children with AIDS be allowed to attend public school: Do you think they should be allowed or should not be allowed?

	n=598
Should Allow	63%
Should Not Allow	22%
Don't Know	15%

Table 1b (Model 2). Subjective Accuracy: Do you think most people in your community agree with your point of view or disagree with your point of view?

	n=598
Agree	46%
Disagree	34%
Don't Know	20%

Table 1c (Model 3). Objective Accuracy

	n=598
Accurate	25%
Inaccurate	45%
No Answer	30%

Table 1d (Model 4). Do you think your point of view on AIDS (whether children with AIDS should be allowed in school) is gaining strength or losing strength?

	n=598
Gaining Strength	61%
Staying Same	12%
Losing Strength	12%
Don't Know	15%

The independent variables for Models 1-3 fall into three basic categories: orientation factors, media exposure and functional uses of television. The orientation variables measure aspects related to orientation of the respondent regarding AIDS. The first measures how much the respondent pays attention to reports about AIDS, and the second determines whether the respondent considers himself or herself to be at risk of contracting AIDS. We also include a continuous variable that measures the educational level of the respondent. The media exposure variables are exposure to television news and newspaper readership, which are measured on a continuous scale of 0 to 7 days per week. In regard to functional uses of the media, we created two independent variables: active use of television and passive use of television. The variables were created from a factor analysis utilizing verimax rotation of four questions: do you watch television to learn about the world; do you watch television because there is nothing better to do; do you watch television because it is exciting; and do you watch television to forget about problems. The two variables created from the factor analysis are both treated as dichotomous variables.

Table 2. Factor Loadings of Functional Use of TV Variables

	Factor 1	Factor 2
TV to Learn	.10074	.95579
Nothing Better to Do	.73441	.20051
Excitement	.67196	.30839
Forget Problems	.79287	-.12674

Model 4 uses the same independent measures as the first three models, as well as the subjective accuracy and objective accuracy variables presented in Tables 1b and 1c.

The second research question is examined with three models, two regarding AIDS (Models 5 and 6) and one regarding the election data (Model 7). Model 5's dependent variable is: "Would you be willing to speak out at a public meeting called to discuss the issue (about whether children with AIDS should be allowed to attend public school)?" (Table 3a); Model 6's dependent variable is: "Would you be willing to march in a public demonstration supporting your point of view (about whether children with AIDS should be allowed to attend public school)?" (Table 3b). The independent variables for Models 5 and 6 can be categorized as climate of opinion variables and media use variables. The climate of opinion variables are subjective accuracy (Table 1b), objective accuracy (Table 1c), and view on school opinion on whether position about children with AIDS in school was gaining strength or losing strength (Table 1d). The media use variables are active use of television, passive use of television, television news viewership and newspaper readership.

For Model 7 we created a dichotomous dependent measure of political activity from a series of questions in the Fall 1988 Carolina Poll that concerned volunteering for a political campaign, wearing political buttons, displaying political stickers, attempts to persuade others about candidates and donation of money. Respondents were categorized as "high political activity if they engaged in any of these activities and "low political activity" if they engaged in none of these activities (Table 3c).

Table 3. Dependent Variables for Models 5-7

Table 3a (Model 5). Would you be willing to speak out at a public meeting called to discuss the issue (about whether children with AIDS should be allowed in school)?

	n=598
Yes	69%
No	21%
Don't Know	10%

Table 3b (Model 6). Would you be willing to march in a public demonstration supporting your point of view (about whether children with AIDS should be allowed in school?

	n=598
Yes	36%
No	55%
Don't Know	9%

Table 3c (Model 7). Degree of political activity in 1988 election

	n=883
Low	69%
High	31%

Model 7 has five independent variables, which can be categorized as media use variables and measures of consonance. The media use variables are television news viewership, newspaper readership and national news magazine readership. The two consonance measures examine the relationship between opinion of which candidate is leading and vote intention, and the relationship between opinion of which candidate is gaining strength and vote intention. If a respondent thought a candidate was leading (Table 4a) or gaining strength (Table 4b) and intended to vote for the candidate, then the respondent is consonant. If a respondent thought a candidate was leading or gaining strength but intended to vote for the other candidate, then the respondent is dissonant. The "Other" category comprises those who responded "don't know" or who where not registered or did not intend to vote.

Table 4. Consonance Measures for Model 7

Table 4a (Model 7). Candidate Leading Consonance Measure

	n=883
Consonant	34%
Dissonant	18%
Don't Know	48%

Table 4b (Model 7). Candidate Gaining Strength Consonance Measure

	n=883
Consonant	40%
Dissonant	11%
Don't Know	49%

Statistical Analysis: The Logit Model

We used the probit procedure with the logit model specification in SAS PC+ to examine the dichotomous extremes of the dependent variables. We examine three statistics in the models:

1) the goodness of fit of the model: this is based upon a chi-square value produced from a contrasts of the intercept model versus the full model.[14]

2) the beta coefficients: if the beta is determined to be a statistically significant contributor to the model, we will examine the beta value. The effect of a change in X_k on the probability of response Y=1 is related to, though not completely determined by b_k; the sign of b_k determines the direction of effect and the effect tends to be large if b_k is large.[15]

3) the odds ratio: since the model specification of the logit model is a sigmoid curve, it is difficult to assess the overall effect of the beta. Thus, it is sometimes better to focus on the ratio of probabilities rather than the probability. We take the antilog of the beta to determine this odds ratio. It is easiest to think of this ratio as follows: Controlling for everything else, a unit increase in X would multiply the odds of the outcome of Y_1 by some factor.[16]

Results

Model 1. Logit Model predicting likelihood of opinion about children with AIDS in school

The model of orientation toward the AIDS issue, media use and functional media use as predictors of opinion about whether children with AIDS should be allowed to attend school is statistically significant; yet only education and TV news viewership are statistically significant contributors to the model. A unit increase in education multiplies the odds of thinking children with AIDS should be allowed to attend school by only 1.107, and a unit increase in TV news viewership multiplies the odds of thinking children with AIDS should be allowed to attend school by only 1.120. The model does not predict opinion of children with AIDS in school very well, and the significant variables do not increase the odds of agreeing substantially.

TABLE 5
Model 1. Logit Model predicting likelihood of opinion about children with AIDS in school

Variable	Beta	Std. Error	Chi-Sq	P	Odds
Intercept	-0.680	0.571	1.415	0.234	0.510
Aids Attention			0.171	0.679	
High	-0.121	0.292	0.171	0.679	0.886
Low	0	0			
Aids Risk			4.238	0.120	
Yes	-0.465	0.253	3.372	0.066	0.628
Don't Know	-0.538	0.472	1.303	0.254	0.584
No	0	0			
Education	0.102	0.034	8.793	0.003	1.107
TV News	0.111	0.050	5.062	0.025	1.120
Newspaper	0.011	0.040	0.074	0.785	1.011
TV Active			2.945	0.086	
High	0.400	0.232	2.945	0.086	1.492
Low	0	0			
TV Passive			0.094	0.759	
High	-0.090	0.223	0.094	0.759	0.914
Low	0	0			

Model Chi-Square=(32.419, df=9, p=0.001)

Model 2. Logit Model predicting likelihood of subjective accuracy

The model of media use, functional use of media and orientation toward AIDS as predictors of subjective accuracy is statistically significant; yet the independent variables do

TABLE 6
Model 2. Logit Model that predicts likelihood of subjective accuracy

Variable	Beta	Std. Error	Chi-Sq	P	Odds
Intercept	0.550	0.531	1.060	0.303	1.733
Aids Attention			2.447	0.116	
High	0.427	0.271	2.477	0.116	1.533
Low	0	0			
Aids Risk			3.737	0.154	
Yes	0.030	0.235	0.017	0.898	1.030
Don't Know	1.118	0.578	3.737	0.053	3.059
No	0	0			
Education	-0.062	0.031	4.042	0.044	0.940
TV News	0.030	0.045	0.442	0.506	1.031
Newspaper	0.030	0.036	0.669	0.413	1.031
TV Active			0.339	0.561	
High	-0.121	0.209	0.331	0.561	0.886
Low	0	0			
TV Passive			0.534	0.465	
High	-0.145	0.200	0.534	0.465	0.865
Low	0	0			

Model Chi-Square=(27.757, df=9, p=0.001) not predict subjective accuracy. Only education makes a statistically significant contribution to the model, and the coefficient is negative indicating that a unit increase in education mildly decreases the odds of subjective accuracy (0.940).

Model 3. Logit Model predicting likelihood of objective accuracy

The model of media use, functional use of media and orientation toward AIDS as predictors of objective accuracy is statistically significant. Only the variable about risk of contracting AIDS is near statistical significance (0.076), and the coefficient is negative. Thus, movement from no risk to risk of contracting AIDS decreases the odds of being objectively accurate as it multiplies the odds by 0.546.

TABLE 7

Model 3. Logit Model predicting likelihood of objective accuracy

Variable	Beta	Std. Error	Chi-Sq	P	Odds
Intercept	-0.954	0.571	2.786	0.095	0.385
Aids Attention			0.081	0.776	
High	0.084	0.294	0.081	0.776	1.088
Low	0	0			
Aids Risk			5.155	0.076	
Yes	-0.595	0.274	4.698	0.030	0.552
Don't Know	0.258	0.528	0.240	0.624	0.294
No	0	0			
Education	0.015	0.033	0.215	0.643	1.015
TV News	0.004	0.050	0.006	0.938	1.004
Newspaper	0.045	0.040	1.261	0.261	1.046
TV Active			0.720	0.396	
High	0.194	0.230	0.720	0.396	1.214
Low	0	0			
TV Passive			0.816	0.366	
High	-0.197	0.220	0.816	0.366	0.821
Low	0	0			

Model Chi-Square=(18.909, df=9, p=0.01)

Model 4. Logit Model predicting likelihood of opinion about children with AIDS in school gaining strength or losing strength

The model of media use, functional use of media and orientation toward AIDS as predictors of whether the respondents view their opinion about children with AIDS in school as gaining strength or losing strength is statistically significant. AIDS attention, education, TV news viewership, subjective accuracy and objective accuracy are all statistically significant contributors to the model. Movement from low attention to high attention multiplies the odds of gaining strength by 2.305, while a unit increase in education multiplies the odds of gaining strength by only 1.115 and a unit increase in TV news viewing multiples the odds by only 1.130 A significant finding in regard to the spiral of silence relates to the contribution of subjective accuracy to the model. A movement from disagree to agree multiplies the odds of viewing one's position as gaining strength by 4.267. While the objective accuracy variable is significant, movement from inaccurate to accurate is not statistically significant (p=0.783).

TABLE 8
Model 4. Logit Model predicting likelihood of opinion about children with AIDS in school gaining strength or losing strength

Variable	Beta	Std. Error	Chi-Sq	P	Odds
Intercept	-1.522	0.792	3.694	0.055	0.218
AIDS Attention			5.590	0.018	
High	0.835	0.353	5.590	0.018	2.305
Low	0	0			
AIDS Risk			1.637	0.441	
Yes	-0.304	0.336	0.818	0.366	0.738
Don't Know	-0.654	0.648	1.018	0.313	0.520
No	0	0			
Education	0.109	0.046	5.542	0.019	1.115
TV News	0.122	0.063	3.835	0.050	1.130
Newspaper	0.020	0.051	0.162	0.687	1.020
TV Active			0.084	0.773	
High	-0.088	0.304	0.084	0.773	0.916
Low	0	0			
TV Passive			0.004	0.947	
High	-0.019	0.291	0.004	0.947	0.981
Low	0	0			
Subjective Accuracy			17.637	0.000	
Agree	1.451	0.356	16.636	0.000	4.267
Don't Know	1.376	0.587	5.498	0.020	3.959
Disagree	0	0			
Objective Accuracy			3.936	0.014	
Accurate	0.119	0.432	0.076	0.783	1.126
Don't Know	-0.843	0.468	3.253	0.071	0.430
Inaccurate	0	0			

Model Chi-Square=(52.474, df=13, p=.000)

Model 5. Logit Model predicting likelihood of speaking at a meeting

The model of media use, functional use of media and climate of opinion as predictors of speaking at a meeting is statistically significant and offers some very interesting findings regarding the spiral of silence. In regard to climate of opinion, subjective accuracy, objective accuracy and view of position as gaining strength are statistically significant contributors to the model. Movement from disagree to agree in subjective accuracy decreases the odds of speaking out (0.571). In regard to objective accuracy, movement from inaccurate to accurate multiplies the odds of speaking at a meeting by 1.906, while movement from inaccurate to don't know decreases the odds (0.440) of speaking. In regard to view of position as gaining strength, movement from losing strength to gaining strength multiplies the odds of speaking out by 3.090 and appears to confirm Noelle-Neumann's hypothesis that those who view their position as gaining strength are more willing to speak out. In regard to media use, passive use of television and newspaper readership are statistically significant. Movement from low passive use to high passive use multiplies the odds of speaking out by 1.815; however, a unit increase in newspaper readership decreases the odds (0.898) of speaking out.

TABLE 9
Model 5. Logit Model predicting likelihood of speaking at a meeting

Variable	Beta	Std. Error	Chi-Sq	P	Odds
Intercept	1.248	0.450	7.703	0.006	3.483
Subjective Accuracy			7.629	0.022	
Agree	-0.561	0.296	3.588	0.060	0.571
Don't Know	0.409	0.465	0.772	0.380	1.505
Disagree	0	0			
Objective Accuracy			12.569	0.002	
Accurate	1.456	0.332	3.770	0.052	1.906
Don't Know	-0.820	0.375	4.787	0.029	0.440
Inaccurate	0	0			
Position on School			17.253	0.001	
Gaining	1.128	0.320	12.388	0.000	3.090
Same	0.223	0.404	0.305	0.581	1.250
Don't Know	0.370	0.408	0.882	0.365	1.448
Losing	0	0			
TV Active			0.002	0.966	
High	-0.010	0.241	0.002	0.966	0.990
Low	0	0			
TV Passive			6.562	0.010	
High	0.596	0.232	6.562	0.010	1.815
Low	0	0			
TV News	-0.064	0.052	1.560	0.212	0.938
Newspaper	-0.108	0.043	6.452	0.011	0.898

Model Chi-Square=(62.407, df=12, p=0.000)

Model 6. Logit Model predicting likelihood of marching at a demonstration

The model of media use, functional use of media and climate of opinion as predictors of marching at a rally is statistically significant; however, only view of position as gaining strength and newspaper readership are statistically significant contributors to the model. Movement from losing to gaining strength multiplies the odds of marching by only 1.100, and, as in Model 5, a unit increase in newspaper readership decreases the odds (0.886) of marching at a demonstration.

TABLE 10
Model 6. Logit Model predicting likelihood of marching at a demonstration

Variable	Beta	Std. Error	Chi-Sq	P	Odds
Intercept	0.364	0.398	0.836	0.360	1.439
Subjective Accuracy			3.403	0.182	
Agree	-.376	0.237	2.514	0.113	0.687
Don't Know	-0.658	0.442	2.210	0.137	0.518
Disagree	0	0			
Objective Accuracy			2.314	0.314	
Accurate	-0.200	0.252	0.630	0.427	0.819
Don't Know	-0.526	0.356	2.180	0.140	0.591
Inaccurate	0	0			
Position on School			8.141	0.043	
Gaining	0.095	0.292	0.106	0.744	1.100
Same	-0.623	0.397	2.466	0.116	0.536
Don't Know	-0.559	0.397	1.982	0.159	0.572
Losing	0	0			
TV Active			0.032	0.857	
High	-0.037	0.204	0.032	0.857	0.964
Low	0	0			
TV Passive			0.031	0.861	
High	-0.034	0.193	0.031	0.861	0.967
Low	0	0			
TV News	0.069	0.045	2.366	0.124	1.071
Newspaper	-0.121	0.035	12.258	0.000	0.886

Model Chi-Square=(64.488, df=12, p=0.000)

Model 7. Logit Model predicting the likelihood of political action

The model of media use variables and consonance measures as predictors of political activity is statistically significant, and TV news viewership, magazine use and the consonance measures are statistically significant. A unit increase in TV news viewership multiplies the odds of political activity by only 1.092. Movement from no to yes regarding magazine readership multiplies the odds of political activity by 2.277. Regarding consonance measures concerning the respondents' views of a candidate as gaining strength, movement from dissonant to consonant multiplies the odds of political activity by 2.155. Regarding consonance measures relating to the leading candidate, the variable is statistically significant; yet, movement from dissonant to consonant is not significant, while movement from dissonant to don't know is statistically significant and decreases the odds of political activity (0.185).

TABLE 11

Model 7. Logit Model predicting likelihood of political action

Variable	Beta	Std. Error	Chi-Sq	P	Odds
Intercept	-1.392	0.371	14.072	0.000	0.249
TV News	0.088	0.044	4.074	0.044	1.092
Newspaper	0.038	0.035	1.176	0.278	1.039
Magazine			18.913	0.000	
Yes	0.823	0.189	18.913	0.000	2.277
No	0	0			
Gain Consonance			24.931	0.000	
Consonant	0.768	0.255	9.101	0.003	2.155
Don't Know	-0.308	0.308	1.004	0.316	0.735
Dissonant	0	0			
Lead Consonance			48.363	0.000	
Consonant	0.072	0.210	0.119	0.730	1.075
Don't Know	-1.689	0.286	34.803	0.000	0.185
Dissonant	0	0			

Model Chi-Square=(275.039, df=8, p=.000)

Analysis

In this study we have attempted to address two research question concerning the spiral of silence:

1. Do media exposure, functional use of mass media and orientation factors influence accuracy of perception on the climate of opinion?
2. Do media exposure and real/perceived perceptions of the climate of opinion influence willingness to express one's political views?

The first four models examined the first question in a step-wise process that moved from the opinion itself to subjective accuracy to objective accuracy and then an evaluation of perception of change regarding the opinion.

Table 12
Research Question 1 Summary

Model	Dependent Variable	Model Significance	Significant Variables	Odds
Model 1	Children in School	+	Education	1.107
			TV News	1.120
Model 2	Subjective Accuracy	+	Education	0.940
Model 3	Objective Accuracy	+	None	
Model 4	Gaining/Losing Strength	+	Attention	2.305
			Education	1.115
			TV News	1.130
			Subject. Accuracy	4.267

Model 1 indicates that education and exposure to television news are related to the opinion that children with AIDS should be allowed to attend public school. This shows that those with higher education and those who expose themselves to TV news are more aware of how the disease is contracted and are more open to letting children with the disease in school. In regard to the spiral of silence, this may indicate the TV news is presenting information that counters conservative, uninformed biases against AIDS.

Model 2 indicates that subjective accuracy is not related to orientation factors, media exposure or functional use of the mass media. Compared to Model 1 this indicates that while TV news exposure is related to opinion, it is not related to subjective accuracy, that is the perception that one is in the majority or minority. This appears to point to other sources that affect one's subjective evaluation about whether people agree or disagree with one's stance on an issue. A logical source for this information, as Glynn and McLeod note, is one's reference group or groups.[17] While education reduces the odds of subjective accuracy in this model, the effect is extremely minimal (0.940).

Model 3 also indicates that media exposure, media use and orientation factors are not related to objective accuracy. Exposure to media and use of television for active or passive information does not affect one's ability to sense "true" opinion. This may indicate that the media are not presenting information regarding children with AIDS attending school that allows one to determine accurately the majority or minority position about this issue. Or, when one considers the lack of findings in Model 2 and Model 3, it may indicate that orientation and the media have little role in subjective and objective accuracy. Again, this may indicate the need for other variables in the models, such as the role of reference groups, that will help determine both subjective and objective accuracy.

Model 4 indicates that one's appraisal of the shift in opinion about the issue is related to attention to the issue, education, TV news viewership and subjective accuracy. Paying attention to reports about AIDS multiplies the odds of viewing one's position as gaining strength by 2.305, while the effects of education and TV news viewership are fairly minimal. The findings for subjective accuracy confirm Noelle-Neumann's idea that public opinion formation is not a normative process and confirm Taylor's findings that self-assessment plays an important role in one's perception of the shifting tide of opinion.[18] Also, when one considers the lack of influence of objective accuracy, i.e. a statistically significant relationship does exist between inaccurate and accurate objective accuracy, this adds credence to Taylor's ideas about subjective projection effects.

For the first research question, we find little or weak support that orientation factors, media exposure and functional use of the media relate to one's opinion, subjective accuracy and objective accuracy; yet we find strong support that attention to AIDS reports and subjective accuracy relate to one's opinion about one's perception of the shifting tide of opinion about children with AIDS attending school.

For the second research question, Models 5 and 6 examine *hypothetical* situations about one's willingness to "speak out" about the children with AIDS attending public school. Movement from disagree to agree in subjective accuracy reduces the odds of speaking out; yet movement from objectively inaccurate to objectively accurate multiplies the odds of speaking out by nearly 2. In line with Noelle-Neumann, a movement from losing strength to gaining strength in one's evaluation of the majority opinion appears to strongly predict willingness to speak out and mildly predicts willingness to march at a rally. Interestingly, passive use of television is related to speaking out. The meaning of this result is difficult to analyze. It may indicate, as in Gerbner's culturation concept, that the entertainment media are presenting a message that is supportive of the position that children with AIDS should be allowed in school; however this is a totally speculative interpretation. Finally, increases in newspaper readership mildly decrease the odds of speaking out and marching.

Table 13
Research Question 2 Summary

Model	Dependent Variable	Model Significance	Significant Variables	Odds
Model 5	Speaking at Meeting	+	Subject. Accuracy	0.571
			Object. Accuracy	1.906
			Position on School	3.090
			TV Passive	1.815
			Newspaper	0.898
Model 6	March at Rally	+	Position on School	1.100
			Newspaper	0.886
Model 7	Political Activity	+	TV News	1.092
			Magazine	2.277
			Gain Consonance	2.155

Model 7 examines predictors of *actual* political behavior. TV news viewership mildly predicts political action, and magazine readership significantly predicts political action; however this finding, as is typical with other findings about magazine use, tends to be related to numerous other factors such as education level and community involvement. Consonance regarding the candidate gaining strength indicates that those who are consonant are more willing to act out politically; yet, movement from dissonance to consonance in the candidate leading variable does not predict political activity, as would be expected.

For the hypothetical behavior situations about AIDS, we find little support that television exposure is positively related to speaking out and marching; yet, increases in newspaper readership mildly decreases the odds of both and passive use of television is related to speaking out. We find strong support that one's appraisal of the shift of opinion about the issue is strongly related to speaking out and mildly related to marching, with those who view their position as gaining strength more likely to speak out and march. Also, those who are objectively accurate are more willing to speak out. For actual political behavior, TV news viewership and magazine exposure are positively related to political action, and we find strong support that those who are consonant about the candidate gaining strength are more likely to be politically active, while those who are consonant about the candidate leading are not more likely to be politically active.

We suggest that future research address the importance of the "don't know" respondents for the dependent variables. In some cases, the significant differences were not between those who saw themselves in the majority or minority but between those who expressed any opinion and those who did not. In this case, we suspect that "don't know" is often the last refuge of the minority. If the media tell you that you stand alone, the easiest escape is to opt out – give up the opinion or at least don't tell the interviewer. Simply keep up with the news but avoid taking sides. Such a tactic eliminates the problem of cognitive discrepancy in keeping up with the news. Second, this study does not incorporate a content analysis related to media coverage of the issues; rather, we simply examine the possible effects of the media. We suggest that future research incorporate a content analysis to determine the actual presentation of the media tone. Third, we recommend that future research in this area address the issue of the role of reference groups in the formulation of the climate of opinion and that the issues of accuracy and consonance be addressed in regard to other controversial issues.

Conclusion

In general, we find little or mild support for the hypotheses that media exposure and functional use of the mass media relate to climate of opinion. However, we are examining data at the individual level where previous research has found little evidence of media effects. As noted by other scholars, this may indicate problems in the universality of Noelle-Neumann's theory and major differences in the diversity of media in the United States and other countries. We do find significant support that attention and subjective accuracy are related to one's appraisal of the shift of opinion. Finally, we do find support, as have others, that if one views one's position as gaining strength, one is more willing to speak out; yet, we find conflicting evidence about measures of accuracy and consonance, indicating in our opinion the possibility of projection effects. While some aspects of Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence theory are supported in this study, the theory appears to have theoretical problems when examined in the light of diversified media systems operating in very pluralistic societies.

Endnotes

1 See *KEIO Communication Review No. 10* (1989), published by the KEIO University Institute for Communication Research (Tokyo). It contains several articles on the climate of opinion/spiral of silence from Japan, China and South Korea. Also, Hye-ryeon Lee, "Media Credibility and the Spiral of Silence," paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, meeting in Washington, DC, 1989, for a study in Korea.

2 S. E. Asch, "Effects of Group Pressure on the Modification and Distortion of Judgments, in D. Cartwright and A. Zander, eds., *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory* (Evanston: Row, Peterson and Company, 1951), pp. 151-162.

3 Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Advances in Spiral of Silence Research," *KEIO Communication Review No. 10* (1989), p. 12.

4 Hiroshi Tokinoya, "Testing the Spiral of Silence Theory in East Asia," *KEIO Communication Review No. 10* (1989), pp. 35-49.

5 Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion – Our Social Skin*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

6 Renate Koecher, "Bloodhounds or Missionaries: Role Definitions of German and British Journalists, "*European Journal of Communication* (1986), 1(1):43-64; Wolfgang Donsbach, *Legitimationsprobleme des Journalismus.* (Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1982).

7 S. Robert Lichter, Stanley Rothman, and Linda S. Lichter, *The Media Elite: America's New Powerbrokers*, (Bethesda, MD: Alder & Adler, 1986).

8 Hans Mathias Kepplinger, Wolfgang Donsbach, Hans-Bernd Brosius, and Joachim Friedrich Staab, "Media Tone and Public Opinion: A Longitudinal Study of Media Coverage and Public Opinion of Chancellor Kohl," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* (1989), 1(4): 326-342.

9 Noelle-Neumann, 1989, *op. cit*.

10 C. J. Glynn and J. M. McLeod, "Implications of the Spiral of Silence Theory for Communication and Public Opinion Research," in K. R. Sanders, L. E. Kaid, and D. Nimmo, eds., *Political Communication Yearbook* 1, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), pp. 42-66. C. T. Salmon and F. G. Kline, "The Spiral of Silence Ten Years Later: An Examination and Evaluation," in K. R. Sanders, L. E. Kaid, and D. Nimmo, eds., ibid. pp. 3-29; D. Garth Taylor, "Pluralistic Ignorance and the Spiral of Silence: A Formal Analysis," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 46: 310-335 (1982); Hubert J. O'Gorman and Stephen L. Garry, "Pluralistic Ignorance – A Replication and Extension," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 40, pp. 304-319 (1976).

11 Salmon and Kline, *op. cit*., p. 28.

12 David H. Weaver, "Political Issues and Voter Need for Orientation,"in Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, eds., *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The agenda-setting function of the press* (St. Paul, MN: West, 1977), p. 109.

13 Taylor, *op. cit*., p. 313.

14 J. Aldridge and F. Nelson, *Linear Probability Logit and Probit Models.* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1984), p. 55. We would also like to express our sincere thanks to

Dr. Ken Hardy, Institute for Research in Social Science, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who graciously assisted us in this project.

15 Aldridge and Nelson, op. cit., p. 43.

16 Aldridge and Nelson, op. cit., p. 47.

17 Glynn and McLeod, op. cit., pp. 44 and 63.

18 Taylor, op. cit., pp. 332-334.

SEEING IS BELIEVING:
NEWS AS CULTURAL RITUAL IN TIMES OF DISASTER

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SEEING IS BELIEVING:
NEWS AS CULTURAL RITUAL IN TIMES OF DISASTER

The crash of United Flight 232 on a remote runway of the Sioux City airport July 19, 1989, was a dramatic tragedy experienced nationally on a number of levels. Dozens of lives were lost; dozens of lives were saved. There were heroes and victims, both in the air and on the ground. There were hours, if not days, of suspense for relatives and friends. There was the technological marvel, the DC-10, brought low by a catastrophic engine failure that could be repeated. There were videotapes and photographs, first of a cartwheeling fireball and then of pieces of blackened wreckage and human detritus. There were babies who miraculously survived and babies who didn't.

Through it all, continuing television news reports and subsequent analysis by the media helped the nation learn about, live through and ultimately in some ways profit from the tragedy. News coverage made the Sioux City crash, almost instantaneously, an event worthy of riveting national attention. That coverage gradually enabled those who were watching it unfold find some meaning in it, on several emotional and intellectual levels. It was the news media that told us what sense to make out of this "senseless tragedy." In this the news media performed a post-industrial version of the ancient rituals, those collections of repetitive, symbolic patterns which serve to unify a community and culture, but with a difference--a visual difference.

How the television news media enact this ritual, the importance of it to the culture, and how that technologically enhanced process reifies our national beliefs is the focus of this analysis. It is a case study analysis of what has become a rather routine process in the treatment of national disasters. Because this process is so ubiquitous and its assumptions so commonplace, its significance is largely ignored.

The use of photographic media in the process adds a new dimension. In talking about images, semiologist Roland Barthes calls the photograph a kind of direct, code-less representation, where the relationship between signifieds and signifiers is simply present. Interventions--such as framing, distance, lighting, focus, speed--all simply provide a connotation, not a transformation as in other kinds of communication. The photograph provides the viewer an awareness of its "having-been-there," causing a disjunction in time and space, a kind of real unreality. And film (or videotape) replaces the "having-been-there" with a kind of simultaneous "being-there." Because of the nature of photograph gives us a message without a code, for the first time in human experience it and videotape are causing a "decisive mutation of informational economies."[1]

If he is right, this makes the rituals of twentieth-century America distinctly different from their forebears, even within the media. Seeing the videotapes of the plane crash and its aftermath is a fundamentally different level of experience than is reading about it, even with a vivid account and a vivid imagination. It serves to make the unfamiliar world of air crash, fire and terror somehow familiar, pushing the envelope of familiar out into the seldom-traversed world of the unfamiliar. The videotapes and recounted events thus become, for a time, a part of our daily pattern of experienced events, not only in terms of having knowledge of them, but in actually seeing and experiencing them. The difference is this. Seeing and vicariously experiencing makes a single dimension of time, a kind of continuing present.

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[1] Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Semiotics*, ed. Robert E. Innis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 200-201.

On another dimension, humans with their cerebrums and endless quest for causality need to make rational sense of what they see, and increasingly rely on news interpreters to give them that sense. In past ages, sense of chaotic events was made by shamans, medicine men, seers, philosophers, ascetics, saints, scientists, even occasionally politicians. When a calamitous event occurs, people are hungry for news and information about the results, dimensions and causes of that event, again hoping to make the unfamiliar familiar by the act of knowing it.

That patterns exist in daily news productions has been demonstrated in numerous studies. Fisher found that viewers/readers use narrative-type news stories to compare those stories to their personal experiences, rejecting those that don't fit.[2] Stories become the way individuals construct and interpret a sense of reality. Barkin and Gurevitch found in stories about tragic events an adherence to narrative principles that utilized dramatic unity and plot development.[3] These elements can also be seen in most news stories, allowing for the distinction between the "chronicle" (for example, lists and announcements) and the "story" types in news.[4] New narratives typically frame current events into existing cultural categories, such as hero and villain, good and bad, normal and weird, and so on.

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[2] W.R. Fisher, "The Narrative Paradigm: In the Beginning," *Journal of Communication* 35 (4), 774-789.

[3] S. Barkin and M. Gurevitch, "Out of Work and On the Air: Television News and Unemployment," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 4 (4), 1-20.

[4] S.E. Bird and R.W. Dardenne, "Myth Chronicle and Story: Exploring the Narrative Qualities of News," in *Media, Myths and Narratives: Television and the Press*, ed. James Carey (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1988).

The audience expects these frames. In fact, reader response theory from literary criticism questions whether a text, in the broad sense, can exist if there [illegible] not an audience with a set of preconceived experiences and expectations to receive it. Communication, particularly in its ritual uses, is a two-way process, using a text that is far less author-centered than one might expect. The audience--the viewers and receivers--have their own expectations and uses of news and narratives.

The audience retains a significant role in "meaning-making" despite the fact that virtually all journalism texts privilege journalists as the only interpreters.[5] The receiver's role in meaning-making is one of the reasons metaphors are prevalent in news narratives. By using analogies viewers/readers can relate to, such as those from sports, war, or drama, the producers of news stories intensify and explain the unfamiliar with use of the familiar. But in doing so, distortions may be created by the authors of these texts.

News producers use narrative elements--including devices such as metaphors--in their social construction of reality. And in their choices of pictures and words the media draw upon a collective vision for what kinds of experience to apply to news decisions and tell viewers what frame of reference to use in "seeing" reality and making choices, whether between candidates or which channels to watch.

Myth is one of those general, all-encompassing terms that is difficult to define. All cultures seem to have variants of certain myths, ranging from mother earth to the hero on a quest. Here, the concept of "myth" is used as a bridge between individuals and their culture, or between their distant and hazy past and all too real present; between their dreams, goals and fears, and their present limited possibilities. Myths are fundamentally narratives, some heroic, some formulaic, some a kind of publicly shared dream. What they possess in common is an attempt to identify some fundamental shared level of cultural experience, as evidenced in words and deeds throughout history.[6] Myths persist, often in transformed or diluted versions, throughout a given culture and among cultures, across the dimension of time.

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[5] Linda Steiner, "The Role of Readers in Reporting Texts," *Journalism Quarterly* 65 (3), 642-647.

Clifford Geertz, in talking about the layers of meaning implicit in a Balinese cockfight, demonstrated in *Interpretation of Cultures* how the work of culture, the transmission of cultural standards and values, operates through a system of ritualistic events. Myth structures social meaning, via an accepted set of narratives or narrative structures that define belief and dictate the rituals to sustain meaning, and in so doing reflect back to participants the social order.

Ritual is to myth what action is to belief. It is through rituals that we embody cultural beliefs and integrate the individual into society. More than that, it is through rituals that we make sense of the world and help keep chaos at bay. Ritual provides a means of acting out that which is beyond our realm of experience, whether it be relating to concepts of God or relating to forces outside our understanding or control.

Human beings seem to need ritual as a means of creating and culling out meaning, no matter how secular and worldly they become. To Geertz, ritual is rooted in religion and provides a general conception of the order of existence. "In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world," thus producing a transformation of one's sense of reality.[7]

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[6] See John Silverstone, "Television Myth and Culture," in *Media, Myths and Narratives: Television and the Press*, 23.

[7] Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 112-113.

That framework can be applied to the production of news and news values. James Carey in *Communication as Culture* notes that most scholarly attention has been focused on the transmission nature of communication and news, the imparting of information from point A to person B across space, using relatively new communication technologies. Little attention has been focused on the use of communication and news as ritual, as a means of sharing, in a reciprocal fashion, patterns, expectations, common understandings, and values in the construction and maintenance of an ordered, meaningful world view.

Thus the act of reading a newspaper is less the sending and receiving of information than it is participation in a dramatic ritual. "What is arrayed before the reader is not pure information but a portrayal of the contending forces in the world. Moreover, as readers [viewers] make their way through the paper, they engage in a continual shift of roles or of dramatic focus."[8] Readers participate in news, by assuming roles and identifications in reaction to what they are seeing. And thus a particular view of reality is created, maintained, repaired or sometimes even transformed by the process of that communication. That isn't to suggest that information isn't also transmitted; but it does suggest that transmission of information is according to patterns and rituals that reinforce cultural values and expectations, and the myths we like to live by. The narratives that use them do much to reassure us, even in the secular and technology-driven twentieth century.

They also define the shifting boundary between the familiar world of common sense, rationality and patterns of every day experience, and the uncontrolled world of the unfamiliar, with its dimly understood, often threatening, unpatterned forces, whether they stem from an internal id, or from the myriad external forces threatening us. Such narratives are required in the performances of news.

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[8] James Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, Inc., 1989), 20.

Mitchell Stephens in *History of News* notes that Englishmen of three centuries ago, who had little in the way of formal news sources other than small coffeehouse publications, thought their society was obsessed with news. News as description and distillation of events, has always been part of the cultural system, whether it was gossip passed orally from village to village, news of war carried to Greek states via fleet-footed runners, or instant transmission by satellite of events on the other side of the earth. This obsession with news--with communication--reflects more than a need to tell, to gossip, to hear. It reflects the side of us that must know, whose cultural, social and sometimes physical survival depends upon that knowing, upon being able to discern and explore the limit between the familiar and the unfamiliar through the use of rituals.

What is it in our culture that seems to foster news ritualization of disasters? Whether it's a 22-vehicle pile-up caused by smoke from a grassfire on an Oregon freeway, a plane crash in Iowa that kills 111 people, or a California earthquake that causes $7 billion in damage, most members of the national community recognize that forces outside their control threaten and take lives almost at random. On an unexpressed psychic level, there may be a visceral connection to an idea the Greeks called "hubris"--that humans, in trying to live like gods, with their language, their superfast machines and stress-filled lives, daily skirt disaster and retribution.

Although thousands of people die every day around the globe, most die in singular incidents of tragedy, unreported and unnoticed except perhaps by their local community. Certainly other tragedies such as disease epidemics take more lives in a short span of time, but they do not share the same elements susceptible to dramatic ritualization.

Continuing with the ill-fated Flight 232 as a guidepost, in a chronological order, first there was the communication of radio traffic indicating the flight was in serious trouble. It was overheard, available to all those with public service band radios . As a result, area broadcast news crews were mobilized and as close as they could get to the runway when the pilot brought down the crippled plane.

The replaying of those few seconds of videotape became a kind of community ritual. Undoubtedly the television news producers and newscasters didn't intend that use, but simply saw it for the dramatic footage and lead-in to subsequent related stories it provided.

We saw the flaming cartwheel made by the monster plane over and over again, in special, regular and follow-up network newscasts, from various camera perspectives outside the fence sealing the perimeter. Over and over again we marvelled that anyone survived the fireball created by exploding jet fuel. Over and over again we were made participants in what happened, made to feel badly that it happened, yet feel gratified that more than half those aboard survived. If they could survive a disaster of such magnitude, it somehow proves that we might survive such forces as well.

We were told almost immediately after the event about the flight information, the radio traffic before the crash, the number of people aboard, and the number known dead or injured for the moment (since those statistics cannot be fully known for many hours after the accident). We heard speculation about possible reasons for the crash from media-designated "experts," about the nature of the ground response, about the nature of the continuing problems with DC-10s, and so on and so on.

A key part of the ritual, of pushing aside the border between familiar and unfamiliar, is to retell the incident in human terms by putting it in a distinctly human perspective. Thus we begin to hear the narratives of the lucky and unlucky survivors. Skillful journalists put us beside the mother who couldn't hold onto her one-year-old, only to find that some unnamed hero among the passengers had taken the child from the wreckage and handed her to another woman; we hear about the human artifacts amid the rubble, like a loose picture of a girlfriend; we learn how the mother of one lucky nine-year-old called her former husband to tell him the boy was dead, only to find out he was alive; we read about their hospital reunion, with the quibbling about divorce and custody set aside for a while. Many of these narratives are tales of moral imperatives and courage fit for any religious code.

Another of the repetitive elements constituting the ritual is to create a framing for heroes and villains. This culture doesn't want to believe forces don't have controllable causes and somewhere to assign blame; those are on the wrong side of the envelope. Flight 232 had dozens of heroes, chief among them the pilot who went by the book until the book failed him, leaving him with only experience, ingenuity and courage to guide him--the true and typical American hero. He managed miraculously to save the majority of lives on the plane, including his own, despite overwhelming odds. It was man over machine, another enduring theme.

We went through the press conference ritual with him and even shared his hero's welcome back in Seattle. Journalistic objectivity went by the wayside when it came to fulfilling the needs of national ritual for creating and honoring the hero. The networks felt no embarrassment about designating the pilot the hero of their disaster drama.

The pilot's press conference was followed by the ritual press conference with members of the flight crew. Other heroes were framed in the interviews with various physicians and nurses called in for heroic duty, and in recounting the struggles rescue personnel had with human triage. Descriptions of their conduct on the ground also fit and enhanced the myth of American rationality, of the benefits of procedural bureaucracy and technology, especially when melded with personal strength and valor in the face of the forces of fire and death.

The cause turned out to be an engine that exploded, cutting the main hydraulic lines, causing nearly total loss of control of the aircraft. Reporters and experts quickly assembled business-like analyses of the accident rates of the DC-10 design and of the hours in service of the various components of this particular engine and plane. Fingers began pointing to a potential villain in the direction of technology that was aging, wearing out.

News, like myth, rests on its authority as truth, and seeing is believing. The culture (here the audience) puts its trust in the videotape, and in those specialists who have access to the "truth," especially in those areas that are unfamiliar. As Foucault deftly points out, those with the word [and picture] are those with the power. Power is "strong" because it produces effects "at the level of desire--and also at the level of knowledge."[9] Power is also found in processes and procedures that have become accepted as a professional and cultural norm, including the use of photograph and videotape to put the viewer into the scene.

Journalists more than most professionals have the power and society's sanction to fit new situations into old ritualistic patterns, such as putting people and events into a paradigmatic frame of good vs. bad, and hero vs. villain, thereby giving their stories the authority of mythological truth. That process strikes a resonant chord in our culture, enabling it to "work" as ritual.

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[9] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-77* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 59.

We privilege televised news reports as providing both visual reality and truth, and we expect from them these ritual patterns that help us make the unfamiliar both real and familiar, and thus controllable. The coverage of Flight 232 and other national disasters provides an example of the mythic framing of the news stories and their ritual uses. It is the nature of this coverage to bring us events in which we can participate as a nation. The new visual technology fosters this collective yet curiously isolated involvement to an extent and with an immediacy never before realized.

The news media are frequently accused of manipulating coverage of events or of emphasizing coverage of disasters to fit their narrow definitions of what is newsworthy. Their motives are variously ascribed as wanting to boost ratings, to maintain status quo relationships among the classes, or simply because their staffs are routinized and lazy.

There is another view, the one explored here. The media also re-enact, with new reality machines, an ages-old pattern of producing myth and ritual that serves to protect, extend and codify the existing culture. They do it not only with new and marvelous tools, but also with ever more complex levels of rationalization. They have become the new mediators between the familiar and the unfamiliar. They provide us the means of a national catharsis that serves to unify our culture and our political and social structures in a way that religion no longer can and politics probably never will.

Catharsis is a term adapted from Aristotle's theories of aesthetics. In drama, he said tragedy should arouse pity and fear in the audience in order to accomplish a catharsis, an emptying out, of such intense emotion. He was writing partly in response to Plato's view that drama improperly inflamed the passions. His view was that, on the contrary, it helps cleanse and release them through the experiences of others.

I would also argue that such a catharsis can also serve to temper emotions, to educate about the emotions, and offer delight and understanding as well. To have consciousness, to "see," is to be all too aware of forces outside one's control. The ritual of coverage of national disasters provides that catharsis, on a national and communal basis as well as a personal level. This process of ritual and catharsis may be one of the most important and least understood functions of television news, particularly as the mythmaking power and function of other cultural institutions is reduced.

The coverage of Flight 232 was not itself unique, although the fact that many survived what appeared to be an unsurvivable calamity certainly heightened its drama. What we find in the routine coverage of that event and others like it in terms of cultural ritual is unique, and deserves more attention and study for its social effects.

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Creativity and creative control in the work of American music radio announcers

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Abstract

The highest levels of radio announcer creativity were found to be no different than the lowest creativity levels of a university undergraduate comparison group. Creativity was found unrelated to perceptions of creative control held over daily work. Perceived level of program director creativity and market size significantly predicted creative control perceptions.

Creativity and creative control in the work of American music radio announcers

The study of media occupational groups has long been a focus of mass communication research interest. Beginning with White's (1950) micro-level study of a telegraph newswire editor's content selection decisions, the exploration of how individual communicators working within symbol-producing mass media organizations shape the form, content, and meaning of their products has come to be known as *communicator analysis* (Ettema & Whitney, 1982).

Although the subjects of greatest interest for communicator analysts have been working journalists and other information providers, studies of entertainment-producing communicators also have appeared. These studies include Hollywood film producers and actors (Cantor, 1971; Peters & Cantor, 1982), Hollywood film musicians and composers (Faulkner, 1971, 1983), commercial television producers (Turow, 1982), television soap opera actors and producers (Cantor & Pingree, 1983), and country music songwriters (Ryan & Peterson, 1982).

Communicator analysts often use a *creativity* perspective to study the work of media entertainment workers, a perspective which is manifest at both the individual (Cantor, 1971; Newcomb & Alley, 1982, 1983; Peters & Cantor, 1982) and the organizational level (Ettema, 1985; Turow, 1982).

Increasingly, the organizational-level view is supplanting the early notion that individual creators are those most directly able to influence content production. In this view, organizational influence on the creative process is seen in terms of various constraints levied upon creative production. But several studies also suggest that creative fulfillment is more the result of collaboration within limits than a collision between creative genius and impregnable constraints (Ettema, 1985; Faulkner, 1971; Gitlin, 1984; Peters & Cantor, 1982).

One troubling aspect of most entertainment communicator studies continues to be the implicit assumption that certain occupational roles are intrinsically creative. Once a particular occupation or organization has been labelled creative, media researchers have assumed without much further elaboration that its practitioners therefore must be creative, too.

In some cases, communicator analysts have not differentiated the degree of worker creativity much further than the grossest kind of "routine versus creative" dichotomy (Cantor, 1971; Newcomb & Alley, 1983), thus inferring that if creative workers do not exhibit much in the way of creative performance, resorting instead to hackneyed routines, then this must be the fault of organizational constraints rather than any lack of individual creative ability.

Music radio announcers, or *disc jockeys*, are a particularly salient example of this conceptual murkiness.

Music radio announcers often have claimed to place a high premium on the creative aspects of their announcing work (Martin, 1985; May, 1979). One of the hallmarks of music radio announcing has been a reliance on humor (Lujack, 1975), a product frequently associated with creative individuals (Davis, 1981). It is also not uncommon to find radio trade press articles explaining "how to spark creative thinking" (How to, 1990; RAB told, 1990; Tipoff to, 1990).

But as an occupational group, how creative are music radio announcers, really? What role would such a claim to creative status play in allowing announcers to define the limits of their daily work and to achieve some measure of autonomy, or *creative control*, within the narrow confines of contemporary music radio formatting? Finally, if announcers perceived themselves as having creative control, what individual or organizational-level variables predict that perception?

Method

Subjects and procedure

A sample of 325 announcers was randomly drawn, one per station, from a pool of radio stations in two Midwestern states during January 1987. The station pool sampling frame was formed from a census of radio stations listed in the *Broadcasting cablecasting yearbook* (1986).[1]

During a six-week period extending from mid-February to the end of March 1987, each of the 325 announcers were mailed an extensive questionnaire with a small inducement and a brief cover letter requesting the respondent's participation.

Embedded within the questionnaire was a creativity test formulated by Davis (1975). The *How Do You Think* (HDYT) test, adult form E, is a 100-item biographical inventory of proven reliability and validity.[2]

A four-item creative control index, formed from an autonomy index devised by Breaugh (1985), also was embedded in the questionnaire.[3] The questionnaire also provided data on these predictors of creative control:

Perceived middle management creativity borrowed from anecdotal observation that creative organizations were more likely to be headed by managers who were themselves creative (Steiner, 1965). Respondents were asked to choose a scale value from zero (very uncreative) to ten (very creative) to indicate the level of creative ability of their immediate supervisor, who was typically a radio station program director;

Organizational age, or the number of years the station had operated since its inception;

Level of competition, or the ratings position of the radio station organization with respect to its target demographic audience;[4]

Type of format, or the radio station's dominant mode of on-air music and information presentation (i.e., top 40/contemporary hit radio, country, album-oriented rock, black/urban, adult contemporary, easy listening/beautiful music, and oldies/solid gold); and

Market size, which was defined as the Arbitron rank designation of a given geographic area based on its population and the number of radio stations within it.[5]

The final return rate for all 325 announcers was 58.5% (n = 176).[6] The sample drawn appeared representative of all stations from the original census.[7] Intercoder reliability was .85.[8]

Results

Radio announcer creativity

What level of creativity existed among music radio announcers?

From a possible low score of one to a possible high score of 500, announcer scores on the HDYT test ranged from 205 to 409 (M = 294.91, s = 38.64; Md = 298.5). Factor purification yielded eight component factors.[9] Index reliability was .83.

Histogram analysis revealed that the HDYT scores were approximately normally distributed: A few announcers were highly creative, while others showed little creativity. Most announcers were moderately creatively predisposed.

But how did announcers fare in comparison with other social or occupational groups?

Davis' (1975) reliability and validity testing of the HDYT test used university undergraduates enrolled in a creativity class to obtain normative data for other users of the HDYT test, among them Bull (1979) and Brennan (1982).[10] Table 1 compares the data of the Davis, Bull, and Brennan studies with the HDYT data of this study.

A comparison of HDYT mean scores between radio announcers and Davis' creativity class students yielded significant differences, t (236) = 9.14, $p < .001$. The average group scores for radio announcers on the HDYT test were significantly lower than were the average group scores of Davis' creativity class students.

Dividing the announcers into groups that represented approximate sample thirds, as Davis did, a comparison between "most creative" announcers and "most creative" students showed significantly lower scores among announcers, t (79) = 8.12, $p < .001$.

A comparison between "least creative" announcers and "least creative" students showed similar significant differences, t (76) = 9.30, $p < .001$.

In fact, a comparison between "most creative" announcers and "least creative" students showed no significant differences, t (82) = 1.10, $p > .05$.

Table 1

Descriptive data for HDYT subject groups

Subject group	*M*	*s*	*n*
Davis creativity students			
Overall sample	349.3	44.9	62
High creatives	383.5	31.7	18
Low creatives	325.4	51.2	21
Radio announcers			
Overall sample	294.9	38.6	176
High creatives	333.9	19.8	63
Low creatives	250.2	20.6	57
Bull students			
Overall sample - males	343.3	44.2	41
Overall sample - females	337.8	42.5	166
Brennan dance students			
Overall sample	348.5	41.4	61

In other words, *even the most creative radio announcers had average scores that were no different than the scores of the least creative university students used in Davis' study.* Announcer scores for both the "most creative" and for the "least creative" group were significantly lower than the average scores of similar groups of university undergraduates.

On the basis of these comparisons, claims to "creative" status by radio announcers appear unfounded.

A potential dilemma exists in making these comparisons, of course: HDYT studies prior to this research have used university students as subjects, whose homogeneity may account for the remarkable similarity of mean scores across the Davis, Bull, and Brennan studies. Furthermore, since Davis' normative data was obtained from students enrolled in a course specifically devoted to the study of creativity, at least the possibility of self-selection and socialization biases must be considered.

One way to address this question is to examine the correlation between announcer creativity and level of education. If level of education has any influence on the creative processes, low levels of creative predisposition ought to correlate strongly with low levels of education.

But as the correlation coefficients of Table 2 demonstrate, no significant relationship held for announcers between creativity and level of education (r =

-.05, $p = .52$, two-tailed). Creativity and level of education did not appear related, at least for radio announcers.

Table 2

Correlations of announcer demographic data with HDYT scores

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. HDYT creativity		-.05	.07	-.32**	-.14*	-.21**
2. Years of education			.09	.03	.24**	-.10
3. Gender				-.20^{++}	-.08	-.17*
4. Age					.29**	.83**
5. Age work was begun						-.21**
6. Years of experience						

* $p < .05$, one tailed. + $p < .05$, two tailed.

** $p < .01$, one tailed ++ $p < .01$, two tailed.

Other variables were related to creativity, though, including negative relationships to age ($r = -.32$, $p = .01$, one-tailed), to the age announcers began working ($r = -.21$, $p = .01$, one-tailed), and to the number of years an announcer worked ($r = -.13$, $p = .04$, one-tailed).

In other words, the most creative announcers were likely to be younger, to have begun work at an earlier age, and to have worked fewer years. Conversely, the older the announcer, the later the announcer began an announcing career, or the longer an announcer worked, the less creative he or she appeared to be.

Radio announcer creative control perceptions

How was level of creativity related to perceptions of creative control?

Respondents indicated that they enjoyed considerable creative control over their work. Respondent scores ranged from a low of four (one was the lowest possible score) to the highest possible score of 20 ($M = 15.25$, $s = 3.83$; $Md = 16$; $Mo = 20$, $n = 25$). Despite the high mean score, histogram analysis revealed that scores on the creative control index were approximately normally distributed. The index was unidimensional with a reliability of .79.

Level of creativity was unrelated to perceived levels of creative control ($r = .03$, $p = .73$, two-tailed). Announcers apparently perceived themselves as having quite a bit of creative control over their work, regardless of their creative predisposition.

Predictors of creative control

Given the inability to explain announcer perceptions of a high degree of creative control in terms of their creativity, what other variables offered an insight into the formation of these perceptions?

Using Steiner's (1965) comments for theoretical ordering, a commonality analysis was first performed by entering four predictors of creative control into a sample-weighted hierarchical multiple regression equation in this order: (1) organizational age, (2) level of competition, a dummy-coded nominal-level variable, (3) perceived level of middle management creativity, and (4) individual levels of creativity (Pedhazur, 1982).

A second commonality analysis added type of format and market size to the above predictors. Since no theoretical ordering could be established for these additional variables of interest, all predictors were entered as a block into a sample-weighted multiple regression equation.

Hierarchical regression results.

Of the various predictor variables, organizational age, F (1, 545) = 4.02, $p < .05$, (R^2 = .01), and the perceived level of program director creativity, F (1, 545) = 7.55, $p < .01$, (R^2 = .01), were significantly related to perceptions of creative control.

Creativity was not useful in explaining the variance in perceptions of creative control, F (1, 545) = 0.97, n.s., (R^2 = .00).

Block entry regression results.

Although organizational age had demonstrated a significant relationship to perceptions of creative control in the previous analysis, it failed to do so in this analysis, F (1, 545) = 3.18, $p = .08$, ($R^2 = .01$).

But perceived level of program director creativity again proved significant, F (1, 545) = 4.84, $p < .01$, ($R^2 = .01$). And knowledge of market rank also was found to be significantly related to creative control perceptions, F (3, 545) = 3.81, $p < .05$, ($R^2 = .02$).

Announcer creativity again failed to significantly explain creative control perceptions, F (1, 545) = 2.16, n.s., ($R^2 = .00$).

Discussion

A persistently popular image of radio announcing is that of an occupation composed of equal parts semi-celebrity glamour and humorous, creative self-expression. The findings of this study, however, cast something of a shadow on this colorful picture of announcing work.

In reality, the announcers in this study were found to be rather low in creativity, yet they regarded themselves as possessing a high degree of creative control over their work. Perceptions of creative control among announcers were unrelated to creativity, although the level of creativity exhibited by announcers' supervisors and the size of market were found to modestly predict the perception of having this kind of control.[11]

A point worth remembering is that this study has drawn a portrait of the *average* music radio announcer, which included only a relative handful of highly creative announcers. Perhaps highly creative announcers are not as plentiful as previously assumed, and perhaps the average announcer is indeed unremarkable.[12]

From the theoretical viewpoint of this study, however, creativity is not necessarily some mysterious essence that one has a fixed amount of. As long as personal or organizational conditions do not interfere with the effort, creative growth in a self-actualizing direction will occur. The key, then, lies in removing personal and organizational barriers that inhibit creative expression for radio announcers.

NOTES

[1] Stations selected for inclusion in the pool had to be commercial and non-religious in nature; had to have a consistent format in the English language; had to be on the air offering regular programming, thus avoiding stations with only an FCC construction permit; had to have a music, rather than a news/information, format; and must not have simply retransmitted (or simulcast) another station's programming by a percentage of 50% or more. A few stations lacked announcing staffs (*n* = 46) or were headed by management who refused to allow announcer participation (*n* = 11), and were eliminated. Only one music announcer was chosen per station in order to preserve independence of observations.

[2] The theoretical base for this study, *humanistic personality theory* (Adler, 1938; Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1968; Rogers, 1962), defines creativity as a conscious individual predisposition to become more self-actualized and mentally healthy. Biographical inventories provide useful measurements of creativity in this perspective since the existence of certain attitudes, motivations, interests, values, or other personality traits are presumed to predispose a person to think and behave more creatively. Previous studies of an early form of the HDYT test (a 102-item Form B) with university undergraduate students yielded reliabilities of .93 and .94, clearly a

reliable indicator of creative predispositions. The Form B and Form E versions of HDYT differed only in the elimination of two weak test items from Form B. Otherwise, they were identical. The validity of HDYT was established with the same group of university undergraduates, yielding an overall Pearson correlation of .42 between test scores and in-class creativity ratings, with males correlating more highly than females ($r = .64$ and $r = .36$, respectively).

[3] Breaugh's original nine item index demonstrated overall reliabilities of .83 and .85 in two studies, with some item subsets receiving reliabilities of .92. Construct validity for Breaugh's index was supported through significant correlations ($r = .77$) with a more global autonomy index. To minimize this study's questionnaire length, the four items with the highest reliabilities from Breaugh's initial studies were used.

[4] Contemporary radio stations usually are not engaged in competition for all listeners in a particular market, only for some of them. Thus, even though a station's overall Arbitron rating might be low compared to other stations, within the desired demographic group the station may be highly ranked. Intense competition occurs either when more than two stations in a market serve the same demographic group, or when the station's rating position is lower than first place for its target audience.

Respondents were asked to provide information on how their station rated relative to its target audience and to other stations within the same market. To provide an independent corroboration of respondent estimates, the *Radio and Records ratings report* (1986) was used to correct for respondent biases.

[5]Arbitron's *Market survey schedule and population rankings* (1986) was consulted to determine the numerical rank of each market, which was used as an operational indicator of its size.

[6]The initial mailing yielded a 41.5% response rate. A follow-up mailing yielded a 17% return increase. The author also telephoned nonresponding announcers in the largest markets to elicit their participation, though no subsequent increase in response occurred. The final return rate for all 325 announcers was 58.5% (n = 190). In spite of efforts to avoid mailings to management or other confounding personnel, it became apparent during the coding of the returned questionnaires that 14 questionnaires had been filled out and returned by management personnel. These were deemed unusable and eliminated from analysis, decreasing the available sample for analysis to 176.

[7]Information on six variables was gathered for comparative purposes during sample frame construction (such as use of automation, use of satellite programming,

and type of station musical format) and from information that could easily be coded for each usable station (such as its geographic location, its frequency band of either AM or FM, and its Arbitron market rank). No significant difference was noted between respondents and nonrespondents on the basis of geographic location (X^2 [1, n = 311] = 1.90, p = .17), frequency band (X^2 [1, n = 311] = 0.25, p = .62), use of station automation (X^2 [2, n = 308] = 0.67, p = .72), or use of satellite delivered programming (X^2 [1, n = 306] = 2.47, p = .12). A comparison of station format types revealed no significant differences (X^2 [6, n = 311] = 7.98, p = .27). A rank-ordered comparison of market size also found no significant differences (Z = .002, $p > .05$). These tests suggested that sample representativeness was retained.

[8] Since the author coded the data without assistance, two other coders were trained and given ten randomly selected questionnaires to code. Closed-ended measurement indexes were not included in this reliability check since judgments about them were not required during coding. Reliability was computed using Scott's (1955) procedure.

[9] Factor purification was undertaken to determine whether individual index items should be eliminated or retained. All factor analyses proceeded using principal axis extraction, varimax rotation, pairwise deletion of missing cases, and an item loading cutoff of .40 or

higher. Eight reliable and unidimensional factors underlying the HDYT test were obtained: paranormal belief (.89), innovative thinking (.82), childlike thinking (.77), dynamic behavior (.75), artistic interests (.73), arousal seeking (.71), self confidence (.71), and impulsiveness (.71).

[10] Bull (1979) used the HDYT as a dependent measure of creativity of 166 female and 41 male university students in a study aimed at developing scales to serve as predictors of creative ability. Brennan (1982) examined the relationship between creative ability in dance and scores of the HDYT test among 61 female university dance majors. Although Bull found significant correlations between three predictor scales and HDYT scores, Brennan found no relationship between creative ability in dance and the HDYT test.

[11] Given the low level of the R^2 results from both analyses, the possibility of an idiosyncratic response cannot be eliminated without further research.

[12] A discussion of alternative explanations of the study's creativity findings is available from the author.

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COMMUNICATIONS AND CULTURAL SURVIVAL: SATELLITE TELEVISION IN THE ALASKAN AND CANADIAN ARCTIC

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Introduction

In January of 1988, the Anchorage Daily News carried an apocalyptic report about a rural Alaskan village. Alakanuk, a community of 550 Yupic Eskimos located in the remote vastness of western Alaska, was struck by an unprecedented epidemic at the beginning in March of 1985.

In a series of incidents that stretched across 16 months, forty-eight young people tried to take their own lives. Eight succeeded. In a city the size of Seattle, the equivalent death toll would have been 15,000. The story sent shock waves throughout across Alaska. Most of the suicides were alcohol-related, but the first to kill himself--a 22-year-old honor student--left this revealing note:

> The future is shit. I've been chased into a rapidly changing culture. Tried my best to keep up, but we're losing and the histories of Americans [is that] Natives have lost all. . . . it's happening again and I don't want to see it.[1]

The report gave testimony to the profound sense of powerlessness and cultural dislocation that is endemic in Native communities throughout much of the Far North. Young Alaskan Native males are ten times more likely to die by suicide than are young men in the nation at large.[2] The alarming suicide rate is the consequence of many factors. Nevertheless, the pandemic of despair and self-destruction highlights the urgent need for strategies--both local and regional--that would enhance the survival of indigenous cultures in the Far North.[3]

This paper discusses the introduction and development of te TV in the northern regions of Canada and Alaska and its al impact upon Native cultures. A comparison of the Canadian and Alaskan experiences provides an uneven roadmap of squandered opportunities and fulfilled promises.

In Alaska a free-market approach to television broadcasting--which emphasized technical rather than social considerations--provided little provision for Native involvement in policy-making and even less Native control over television content.

The Canadian experience, however, demonstrates that satellite television can play a vital role in the maintenance and renewal of indigenous culture. Broadcasting policy in the Canadian North allowed for local participation in decision-making and television programming. As a consequence, television produced by Inuit for Inuit is thriving--and expanding--in the Canadian Arctic. In Alaska, the situation is less promising: southern TV pours into the villages unabated and there is less culturally relevant programming today than there was at the beginning of the decade.

The Eskimo peoples of North America--the Yupic and Inupiaq of Alaska, the Inuit of northern Canada--are in the midst of convulsive change.[4] Scattered across a thinly populated area encompassing millions of square miles, Eskimos remained relatively isolated until the last few decades. In the space of one generation, they have witnessed social and technological changes that were spread over 200 years on the rest of the continent. The introduction of universal education, the sudden reality of large scale oil and mineral development, and the move from a subsistence-based to a cash-based economy forever altered traditional ways of life.

Development, which proceeded largely through the wholesale importation of southern technologies and development strategies, placed increased pressures upon native communities. The settlement of Alaskan Native land claims in 1971 came in response to demands from the south to free up land for oil development. It required Alaskan Natives to set up corporations to manage their resources, which became corporate rather than collectively-held tribal assets.[5] Although Native land claims have yet to be resolved in Canada, development has followed a similar course.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was a domestic version of the diffusion model of development that had been applied in many Third World countries during the 1960's. Paternalistic in orientation, it ignored the strengths of traditional culture and economy and viewed Alaskan Natives as an impoverished subgroup which languished at the margins of society.[6] The remedy was to use large scale development to gradually absorb those still active in the traditional sector.[7] The bounties of southern-style modernization would thus eventually trickle up to the north. In a report to the Alaskan Native Review Commission, Canadian Jurist Thomas Berger assessed the social implications of this model of development:

> I have seen the effects of assimilationist policies in the villages. . . . there is a feeling of deep, bitter resignation, a sense of irretrievable loss that has

> weakened the hold of some on their very lives. The sense of loss, of irretrievable grievance, has had a bearing on the rates of alcoholism, violence and suicide in rural Alaska.[8]

The introduction of satellite television in the Canadian and Alaskan Arctic in the 1970's came as a mixed blessing. It ended the geographical and psychological isolation of northern peoples by bringing images of the outside world into their villages and homes.[9] But it also accelerated the rate of cultural erosion through the massive infusion of southern-produced entertainment programming that was largely irrelevant to values and experiences of Native people. Satellite television made possible a new and potentially devastating form of intrusion, an electronic colonialism which--if given unbridled rein--could result in the extinction of Native cultures and their replacement by the alien norms and values of the urban consumer society.

Communication and Culture

Satellite television must be viewed in the context of other outside influences that are sweeping the North. Public education and massive resource development are important agents of change. But the power of communications technology to define reality, communicate values, and erode culture is central to any understanding of the dislocation that has descended upon the North.

Communication, according to James Carey, is the entire process by which culture is brought into existence, maintained, and transformed.[10] The word "communication," in fact, shares it roots with the words "community" and "commune."[11]

Harold Innis, the Canadian communications theorist, argued that any medium of communications is biased in one of two directions. Space-biased media--print and electronic media--are most efficient in moving messages across great distances. Time-biased media--the spoken word, the oral tradition--are not effective over distance and are concerned more with maintenance of messages through time.

Societies and cultures are shaped by the media upon which they depend. The bias in space-oriented cultures is towards new information. Knowledge is subject to continuous obsolescence and constant renewal. Differences between the young and the old are amplified and generational relationships become inverted: the mantle of wisdom is more often bestowed upon the young and media-sophisticated--those who possess the freshest information or knowledge of the latest innovation.

Because they are efficient in transmitting messages across vast distances, spatially-biased media encourage the expansion of secular authority, commercial activity, and centralized control. Time-oriented cultures, by contrast, emerge from oral traditions and focus as such more upon history, continuity, and permanence than upon expansion and change.[12]

Neither system of communications is inherently superior or desirable. Instability and dislocation occur, however, when one system achieves a position of monopoly over the other. The triumph of space-oriented media leads to overcentralization of authority and power and the disintegration of cultures which exist at the margins.[13] An overemphasis on time-biased forms of communication can lead to ". . . narrowness, inefficiency, and an inability to adapt to changing circumstances."[14]

The ideal, then, is to somehow strike a balance between the warring tendencies of space-biased and time-biased forms of communication or, as Geertz characterized the dilemma, to reconcile "epochalism," the forward-looking "spirit of the age," with "essentialism," the province of tradition, myth, and legend.[15]

The solution lies in social policy and planning. Satellite television is technologically biased towards centralization. Messages emanating from centralized production points can be efficiently broadcast over vast geographical distances to isolated audiences who are provided little opportunity to participate beyond their role as passive consumers. In the Far North, the flow of messages is overwhelmingly one way, from south to north.

The example in the Canadian Arctic, however, demonstrates that a sustained commitment to planning and support for indigenous broadcasting can adapt satellite television technology to serve local needs. The Alaskan experience, by contrast, represents the triumph of technical imperatives over social concerns: it offers an example of a communications policy whose primary concern is ". . . spreading messages further in space and reducing the cost of transmission."[16]

Satellite Television: Alaska

The first live satellite telecast--a football game--was beamed into Alaska in August 1969. Electronic communications within the state was in its infancy. Commercial television and radio existed only in urban areas and statewide telephone service was a patchwork system originally developed by the U.S. Air Force.[17]

The state soon embarked upon a series of experiments designed to demonstrate the technical feasibility of bringing television to rural villages.[18] These efforts were guided by the belief that improvements in communications were necessary for change and development in rural Alaska.[19]

A 1971 pilot project provided videotapes of Public Television programs to three remote villages for rebroadcast over low-power television. Programming, which was not a primary consideration, was chosen randomly; the project was deemed a technical success.[20]

The experiment in Mini-TV was expanded in 1973. In the "Project Wales" experiment, taped programming was provided for six months to the residents of an island community in western Alaska. Project Wales was deemed a success. A study on the effects of the new medium concluded that Wales children showed ". . . significant improvement in verbal intelligence" as a result of the introduction of television. Researchers Madigan and Peterson dismissed as "patronizing" the concerns expressed by critics that television might somehow erode traditional Eskimo culture:

> The decision as to whether, or when, a particular village should have television (or electricity, a water system, sewer, or an airport) should be based on only two considerations: is it in any way economically feasible, and do the people of the village want it?[31]

A third experiment in 1974 brought Mini-TV to three other villages. The objective was to demonstrate the feasibility of expanding the system throughout rural Alaska. Again, technical concerns were given major priority: a progress report on the project by the Alaska Educational Broadcasting Commission divided its findings into eight major sections, only two of which dealt with audiences or program content.[32] A report commissioned by the state, however, noted that no provision was made for community involvement in two of the three villages. As a consequence, the report concluded, an opportunity to deliver culturally supportive programming had been squandered.[33]

At about the same time, Alaska was chosen to participate in NASA's ATS-6 Satellite Demonstration Project. The project, which lasted from October 1974 to May 1975, was designed to test experimental equipment and to give the state technical experience in satellite television broadcasting. It provided educational and health programming as well as a general audience program, "Alaska Native Magazine," to the 63 communities which fell within the satellite footprint. In a gesture towards village participation, the Governor's Office of Telecommunications (GOT) required that consumer committees be established.

Yet although programming was to be aimed at rural villagers, the content committee, on the recommendation of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), was made up of urban representatives of the Native corporations:

> By designating Native corporations as the vehicles for selecting consumer committee representative, the GOT had effectively chosen the wrong sample: urban corporate leaders who move comfortably in the white world, rather than rural villagers who retain traditional values and cultural patterns. . . . Administrators apparently were less concerned with whether committee members actually represented rural audiences than with the time wasted in reviewing past programming.[24]

Commercial television arrived in rural Alaska hitched to the state-supported satellite telephone service. The Mini-TV and ATS-6 experiments had proven the technical feasibility of rural television. And in the mid-70's--as oil revenues began to pour into state coffers--Alaska went on a buying spree of telecommunications hardware.

Twenty three of the 100 small earth stations originally built for telephone service were modified in 1976 to permit satellite television reception. Money was also provided for one channel of public service and entertainment television in what was to be a one year demonstration project. The entire cost of the Satellite Television Project (TVP) was borne by the state of Alaska.[25]

Again, technical concerns took precedence over social considerations. Consumer participation and program content stood far down on the list of planning priorities: "Even before the hardware for the satellite demonstration project was in place the state divested itself of responsibility for program selection."[26]

That chore was passed to the Alaska Federation of Natives

(AFN) telecommunications committee. The AFN committee--most of whose members were non-Native (although they were employed by Native corporations)--was originally charged with overseeing hardware installation.[27] Concerns over the cultural relevance of program content were dismissed in the GOT's final report: the AFN was free to select--from NBC, ABC, CBS, and PBS offerings--whatever programming it deemed appropriate.

After 1982, responsibility for programming decisions was passed to a 17-member citizens committee comprised of representatives of the 12 regional Native corporations, one individual from the University of Alaska, Public Broadcasting, and the Department of Education respectively, and two members appointed by the governor.[28] A subsequent study of the effects of the introduction of television into rural Alaska contained this observation about the priorities of state supported television:

> The emphasis of the state's original Television Demonstration Project was on hardware and the delivery system, not on the possible social and cultural impacts television might have on the viewing audience. The same emphasis continues to dominate policy and the allocation of funds. . . .Policy makers need to recognize that the television delivery system they support has influenced, and will continue to influence, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of its viewers throughout Alaska.[29]

Another researcher, Douglass McConnell, warned that commercial TV could become the "pied piper of the new world," reducing Alaska's rich cultural diversity to the "lowest common denominator." Citing studies which linked the introduction of television to cultural decline in traditional societies, McConnell noted that Alaska had spent little money to find out if such fears were warranted. He also suggested that a sustained public commitment to providing "telecommunicable voice" to Alaska's Natives could make a difference.[30]

James M. Orvik shared that belief. Orvik insisted that only planning could temper the centralizing tendencies of satellite television:

> . . . early reliance on satellites as the principal means of delivery could be an open invitation to begin centralizing and homogenizing the entire process of media delivery and media use. To the extent such a trend could erode the emergence of local and regional systems, there is reason for concern.[31]

The Alaska satellite project continued beyond the one year demonstration period. Flush with royalties from North Slope oil, the state purchased its own satellite--Aurora--and extended the network of earth stations to 248 rural villages, including the seven Inupiaq Eskimo communities along the north coast. RATNET (Rural Alaska Television Network), as the system came to be known, eventually delivered 18 to 24 hours of programming 365 days of the year.[32]

A second channel--"Learn Alaska"--was added in 1981 to supplement entertainment fare with educational and culturally relevant programming. Despite the gesture, the percentage of Native-oriented programming remained low:

> The state has been more interested in building earth stations and renting transponders than in funding the production and distribution of programs by, for, and about Native people and cultures.[33]

The continued presence of any Native-oriented programming came under threat in the mid-1980's as oil prices--and state tax revenues--began to plunge. "Learn Alaska" was canceled by the legislature in 1986.[34] The final death knell sounded in June of 1989 when the RATNET instructional channel was dissolved in a flurry of budget cuts.[35]

Ironically, although the state has abandoned its role as a provider of indigenous television programming, the state satellite distribution system has enabled southern television to flood into rural Alaska. The seven Inupiaq communities along the north coast, for example, now receive 12 channels of commercial television from the mainland U.S. There is little if any programming that reflects the traditional values and way of life of Native Alaskans.[36] Only two programs were broadcast in the Inupiaq language in 1989 and independent producers have all but disappeared because of budget cuts. In many ways, the worst fears of the techno-pessimists have been realized.

Satellite Television: Northern Canada

As in Alaska, television arrived uninvited into the villages of northern Canada. But unlike Alaska, government policy was not driven solely technological imperatives. The Canadian example demonstrates that satellite television can be tailored to serve regional needs and support indigenous cultures.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the government broadcasting service, brought local radio to the North in the 1950's through the establishment of five regional broadcast stations. Programming consisted of a mix of local broadcasts in

Native languages supplemented by CBC network tapes.[37]

Television came to a few remote communities in 1972 through CBC's "Frontier Package," a four-hour per day, videotape service selected from regular CBC network programming. Full service CBC television programming was introduced in the eastern Arctic in 1973 through the Anik satellite (Inuktitut for "friend").[38]

In 1980 the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) licensed Canadian Satellite Communications Inc. (CANCOM) to distribute four additional channels of Canadian TV to the North via satellite. The service was expanded in 1983 to include four U.S. network signals: ABC, CBS, NBC, and PBS. The licensing agreement also required a community access channel in each of the villages served by CANCOM.[39] By the early 1980's most Inuit villages had direct satellite service and the Canadian Arctic today--like northern Alaska--is television saturated.[40]

While these changes were taking place, a series of parallel developments began to demonstrate the viability of and the desire for indigenous television--television produced by the Inuit for the Inuit. In 1973 a federally-sponsored satellite experiment was undertaken with Tagramiut Nipingat, a Canadian Inuit organization.[41]

In 1978 Inuit Tapirisat, another Inuit organization, received government funds to establish a studio and production center and train Inuit in television production. The Inukshuk (Inuktituk for "signpost") project set up a videotape distribution system and provided broadcasts via satellite from

September of 1980 to May of 1981.[42]

For the first time in the Arctic, television programming travelled east to west instead of south to north. These early efforts demonstrated both the Inuit talent for television production and the capacity of satellite technology for east-to-west interactive participation. The 1973 and 1978 efforts included live teleconferences and programming in the Inuktituk language. The goal, according to Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the group which lobbied for the creation of Inukshuk, was ". . . to use video to strengthen the social, cultural and linguistic fabric of Inuit life."[43]

The success of Inukshuk led in 1981 to the creation of the first Native broadcasting corporation in North America, the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC). Funded by the Canadian government, the IBC set up production facilities in six northern communities. By 1982 the IBC had 24 full-time salaried personnel, six part-timers, and ten to twelve volunteers. Unlike the efforts at Native broadcasting in Alaska, IBC programs were entirely in the Inuktituk language. In their own words, the Inuit had created: ". . . a sophisticated, modern television network designed to meet the needs of a people, and not a sponsor."[44]

Yet despite its successes, IBC faced serious problems in its early efforts to provide quality programming. Without a broadcast channel of its own, the IBC was forced to borrow transponder time from CBC Northern Service. CBS Northern, in turn, had very little time available for its own use and could be pre-empted without notice from CBC. This meant that IBC was third in line. Typically, IBC would sign on after midnight and had an average of four and one half hours of less than prime-time scheduling at its disposal.[45]

This situation has been somewhat ameliorated. IBC now broadcasts an average of five and one half hours per week. As of November, 1989, IBC has regular prime-time hours reserved for its use; IBC can also pre-empt CBC programs which originate in the U.S. Ironically, the success of efforts to produce more Canadian programming has resulted in less American programming on CBC and, as a consequence, fewer opportunities for IBC to pre-empt.[46]

The creation of the IBC came in response to Inuit demands for control over their own broadcasting destiny. The Inuit lobbied since 1973 for full-service Inuktitut television as a " . . . primary, single channel service, and not as an afterthought."[47] In 1979 they demanded that no new television service be brought into the villages unless it was devoted to local broadcasting under community control.[48] These efforts grew out of the certainty that communication could play a central role in the survival of Inuit identity in a rapidly changing world:

> We need information, masses of it. We need it in our own language. . . . We need to have the information spread throughout our communities. . . . This has to happen fast. If it doesn't, we will vanish as a people. Our future is at stake.[49]

Yet the technology that brought much-needed information into the villages also brought an onslaught of southern-based television programming which many believed would erode traditional values and culture. Reaction to the new medium gave testimony to its perceived power. The Inuit Tapirisat warned:

> . . .the introduction of television has meant the last refuge of Inuit culture, the home, has now been invaded by an outside culture . . .[50]

The IBC echoed these concerns in 1982:

> . . .no single feature of southern culture was as profound in its effects on the Inuit was of life as television. It destroyed old habits and social behaviors; it imported new values and attitudes. It became an alternative way of life, particularly for the young.[51]

The Inuit complained that they had not been consulted prior to the introduction of television, that there was no provision for Inuit cultural content, that programming decisions were made by marketing and advertising experts solely to advance the values of the consumer society.[52] Inuit Tapirisat insisted that only pan-arctic participation could compensate for the centralizing tendencies of satellite technology and the culturally destructive power of commercial television:

> . . .developments in electronic media which allowed the latter to overcome great distance barriers in the North also allowed the same media to flood the North with southern . . . programming. . . .The avalanche of southern style entertainment, with values and ideas totally alien to the Inuit, threatens the very existence of Inuit culture. . . .southern dominated media do little to develop any cohesiveness among Inuit and . . .present a distinct threat to the already struggling Inuit culture. . . Inuit can only hope to survive as a cohesive group if fast and easy communication can be developed between Inuit communities in northern Canada, as well as with Inuit groups in other countries.[53]

The demands for an indigenous electronic voice were buttressed by a body of research which documented the erosive effects of television and raised serious questions about the future survival of Inuit culture in the face of an unfettered flow of southern-based entertainment programming. These studies gave a ring of legitimacy to Inuit fears and a stamp of authority to Inuit calls for control.

Andre H. Caron, in a study of the effects of the introduction of television into a remote village along Hudson Bay, reported that even limited exposure to television could change children's images of cultural groups familiar to them. Caron suggested that the television content should be tailored to meet the needs of remote communities: "Why not use it to solidify the tissues of the community by reinforcing the stature of all cultural groups present in the communities?"[34]

Gary Granzberg, in a study of television among the Algonkian Indians of central Canada, concluded that Native groups in the midst of cultural transition were most susceptible to the effects of television content.[35]

Perhaps most searing indictment of the cultural consequences of Canadian network television in the North came in a longitudinal study conducted by Gary O. Coldevin between the years 1974 and 1983. Coldevin studied groups of children and adults both before and after the introduction of television in Frobisher Bay in the eastern Arctic. He also used a control group of village children who were introduced to television much later.

Coldevin's initial report suggested that although adults suffered little cognitive dissonance, television had a profound impact on Inuit children. English had become the "acceptable" peer language and children were fast becoming alienated from the collective past of their community and culture. Coldevin observed:

> Television has captured a large portion of the lives of both Eskimo parents and children but is, for the most part, irrelevant to their deep-seated social customs and environment.[56]

Subsequent data reaffirmed his initial findings. The amount of exposure to television played a "catalytic role" in the rate of cultural disintegration.[57] The cultural replacement gap between adults and children would increase, Coldevin warned, with continued exposure to southern television.[58] Without intervention, the prognosis was grim: Inuit culture, Coldevin concluded in 1985, was "one generation away from extinction."[59]

Without exception, the studies on the effects of television in the Canadian Arctic echoed Inuit demands for involvement in the production and distribution of broadcast programming. And there was an awareness within the inner sanctums of CBC of the need for and value of culturally relevant programming in the Far North.

A CBC-sponsored survey of shortwave radio listeners in 1977, for example, revealed that an overwhelming majority of Inuit in the Northwest Territories desired more programming in Inuktituk. Regarding suggestions for new programming, the first preference was for more news about the North followed by music performed by Inuit artists. The third choice--stories and legends--indicated the future role that electronic media could play in the transmission of oral culture and traditions.[60]

A 1979 CBC Northern-sponsored study of radio broadcasting in

Greenland urged that radio beamed at Canadian Inuit should be produced by Canadian Inuit ". . .in order to avoid as much as possible . . .'media manipulation' and 'cultural imperialism' . . .and in order to let Inuit culture and identity survive."[61]

Similar sentiments reverberated through other CBC reports. Doug Ward, director of CBC Northern acknowledged in 1978, for example, that

> . . .the northern TV programming day is overwhelmingly southern. It does not talk the languages of the North, . . . It does not reflect the joys and frustrations of northern life--just southern.[62]

In 1980, the suggestions and concerns of the Inuit, the research community, and CBC officials took shape as formal policy recommendations.[63] With the creation of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation in the following year, a critical mass had been achieved: the way was clear for the eventual establishment of a Native controlled and operated satellite channel in the Canadian Arctic.

The prospects for the growth of indigenous television continue to brighten in northern Canada. In April of 1989, the Canadian Parliament allocated $10 million for the creation of an all-Native satellite channel. Television Northern Canada (TVNC), which is slated to go on the air in November, 1991 will offer round-the-clock broadcasts of programming produced by a consortium of Native broadcasters, including the IBC. The channel will serve Native communities in an area that stretches across northern Canada from Labrador to the Alaskan border. TVNC will be decentralized in organization, with five to six satellite uplinks and numerous downlinks. The dream of an east-to-west Native satellite television system will finally be realized.[84] The creation of TVNC marks the fruition of nearly two decades of Native efforts to gain access to the means of television production and satellite distribution.

Conclusions

In less than a generation, the Eskimos of the Far North have been catapulted from the communality and continuity of the oral tradition into the electronic immediacy of the global village. Although it arrived uninvited, satellite television brought many blessings. It ended the physical and psychological isolation of the Yupic, the Inupiaq, and the Inuit; it enabled them to learn about the outside world; and it contributed to the growing sense of solidarity among the peoples of the North, a pan-Arctic consciousness the led to the creation of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) in 1977.[85]

Satellite television has also exacted a cost. The relentless invasion of southern entertainment programming has eroded Native languages and traditions, alienated the young from their communal past, and contributed to the sense of cultural dislocation and despair that ravages the villages of the Far North. Other factors have contributed to the disruption of village life, but the power of television in undeniable.

Canada and Alaska offer contrasting models of satellite television. The Canadian model demonstrates that the destructive centralizing tendencies of satellite technology can be mitigated through public support for de-centralized, indigenous broadcasting. The Canadian government has long recognized the role of telecommunications in national culture. Since its inception the CBC has labored to provide bi-lingual services to every region of the country. The creation of Television Northern Canada, the all-Native television network, is the logical extension of that tradition of support for cultural pluralism.

The development of satellite television in Alaska, by contrast, was guided by two uniquely American traditions of mass communication: a free-market philosophy which scorns governmental participation and treats television programming like any other commodity; and an unbending American faith in the inherent beneficence of technology. The State of Alaska made belated gestures towards Native participation, but in the end, technical considerations overwhelmed social concerns.[66] Alaska remains the only state with its own telecommunications satellite. The irony is that it now carries no state-supported television into the villages.

Opinions remain divided over the prospects of Native broadcasting in stemming the tide of cultural replacement in the Canadian North. Marianne Stenbaek insists that indigenous broadcasting has had a powerful influence on the Inuit's cultural survival and political empowerment.[67] Gail Valaskakis offers a less optimistic appraisal, noting that outside programming still constitutes the overwhelming majority of television fare.[68]

Perhaps the most daunting task which faces Inuit broadcasters lies in creating programming that can compete with the slick productions that flow in from the South. Inuit producers possess the talent and expertise but lack the funds to compete head to head with Hollywood studios.[69] The entire four-year budget of Television Northern Canada is $10 million Canadian--about what it costs to produce one American show for one season. Coldevin warned as far back as 1979 that because of "entertainment entrenchment," it may prove difficult to wean Native children from their steady diet of southern television.[70]

Concern for cultural stability is no idle exercise in nostalgia. Culture is the means by which a community imposes order and meaning upon the world and sustains itself through time. Research shows that television can be an active agent in cultural destruction.[71] Research also shows that cultures in transition--such as the Inuit, Yupic, and Inupiaq--are most susceptible to television's seductive allure.[72] This is not to suggest that there is a direct causal link between television consumption and Native suicide. It suggests rather that television content can play a role in eroding the norms and values by which a culture defines and maintains itself.

Anthropologist Seymour Parker, who studied the village of Alakanuk more than 20 years before the eight young people took their own lives, noted in 1964 that villagers were in the first stage of acculturation: they were borrowing western (i.e. southern) technology but were adapting it to their own needs. He warned of the possible consequences of a second stage of acculturation in which villagers would adopt western values as well: "They would look at themselves and their parents and their lives through western eyes and find it all of little value."[73]

Parker's warnings were darkly prophetic. The issue takes on an increasing urgency as the pace of development continues to accelerate in the Far North. Canada has taken an important step in supporting Inuit television as means of cultural preservation. A more daunting task remains in Alaska. The first step is to abandon the closely-held American belief that unbridled technological change is somehow synonymous with progress.

NOTES

[1] Sheila Toomey, "Alakanuk's Suicide Epidemic," Anchorage Daily News. 10 Jan. 88: 1. This was the first in a series of reports on suicide among Alaskan Natives. The Anchorage Daily News was awarded a Pulitzer prize for the series.

[2] The suicide rate for Alaskan Native males between the ages of 20-24 is 257 per 100,000. The national average for males of the same age is 25 per 100,000. These figures are for 1983/1984. Cited in Anchorage Daily News 11 Jan. 88: A6. The suicide rate in 1984 for the same age group in the Northwest Territories was 94 per 100,000--considerably less than in Alaska. Suicide in Alaska. Minister of National Health and Welfare (no date).

[3] The Anchorage Daily News won a Pulitzer prize for its series of reports on life in the Native villages.

[4] There are an estimated 24,000 Inuit Eskimos living in northern Canada. In Alaska, there are an estimated 28,000 Inuit and Inupiaq Eskimos.

[5] The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was passed by Congress in 1971. It deeded 44 million acres (10% of the state) to various native groups and provided $962.5 million as compensation for other land. Under the terms of the act,

Natives became shareholders in one of 12 regional corporations. For a discussion of ANCSA see Thomas R. Berger, Village Journey (1985: Wang and Hill) 20-48. .

[6] Thomas R. Berger, Village Journey, (New York: Wang and Hill, 1985) 45.

[7] Berger argues that the creation of regional and village corporations has "institutionalized" the conflict between Inupiaq who wish to preserve the traditional way of life and those who advocate a more rapid pace of modernization. According to Berger, ANCSA has pitted urban corporate values against rural subsistance values. Berger 31.

[8] Berger 187-188.

[9] For a discussion of the this issue see Marianne Stenbaek, "The Politics of Cultural Survival: Towards a Model of Indigenous Television," American Review of Canadian Studies (Autumn, 1988).

[10] James W. Carey, Communications as Culture (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989) 184. James W. Carey, "Culture, Geography, and Communications: The Work of Harold Innis in an American Context," Communication, Culture, and Dependency. 75.

[11] James W. Carey, "Harold Adams Innis and Marshall McLuhan," Antioch Review (1967) 305.

[12] Carey, "Innis and McLuhan" 275.

[13] James W. Carey, "The Mythos of the Electronic Revolution," American Scholar (1970) 239-241.

[14] Mark J.Freiman, "Consumer Sovereignty and National Sovereignty in Domestic and International Broadcast Regulation," Cultures in Collision (New York: Praeger) 114.

[15] Quoted in Elihu Katz, "Can Authentic Cultures Survive the Media?" Journal of Communication (Autumn, 1977): 114.

[16] James W. Carey, "Culture, Geography, and Communications: the Work of Harold Innis in an American Context," Communication, Culture, and Dependency. 83.

[17] The Air Force network, the Alaska Communications System, was sold to RCA Global Communications, Inc. which incorporated as RCA Alascom in 1969.

[18] Beverly James and Patrick Daley. "Origination of State-Supported Television in Rural Alaska," Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media (Spring 1987).

[19] Forbes et al., *Social and Cognitive Effects of the Introduction of Television on Rural Alaskan Native Children*, (Fairbanks: University of Alaska, March 1984) 3.

[20] James and Daley 7.

[21] R.J. Madigan and W. Jack Peterson, "Television on the Bering Strait," *Journal of Communication*, (Autumn 1977): 185-186.

[22] James and Daley 171.

[23] quoted in James and Daley 172.

[24] James and Daley 174-175.

[25] Forbes et al. 5.

[26] Forbes et al. 7.

[27] Forbes et al. 7.

[28] Bylaws established by the Rural Alaska Television Council, !7 Feb. 82. Revised 13 Aug. 87.

[29] Forbes et al. 150.

[30] Douglass McConnell, "Cultural Impact of Television in Alaska," in Robert Walp Ed. *Telecommunication in Alaska* (Honolulu: Pacific Telecommunications Conference) 94.

[31] James M. Orvik, "ESCD/Alaska: An Educational Demonstration," *Journal of Communication* (Autumn 1977): 172.

[32] State of Alaska, Division of Telecommunications, *Seventh Annual Report*, (Juneau: Department of Administration, February 1988) 2.

[33] McConnell 82.

[34] James and Daley 178.

[35] Telephone interview with Jodie Thomason of the North Slope Borough, Barrow, Alaska, 27 Nov. 89. Instructional television is now available only in the Anchorage area. Telephone interview with Tony Ramirez, project coordinator of the Satellite Television Project, Anchorage, Alaska, 28 March 90.

[36] There are a few regional television production centers which occasionally produce taped programming for Native communities. The North Slope Bourough in Barrow, for example, produces some videotapes on local history and culture. Most of its output, however, deals with the activities of the regional corporation and a public affairs program avaiable only in Barrow.

Tapes are provided to villages upon request. Another center in Kotzebue recently closed due to budget constraints. Telephone interview with Jodie Thomason, 27 Nov. 89.

[37] Shortwave broadcasts have been available since the 1940's. Even after the introduction of local radio, many isolated Inuit communities still depended on CBC shortwave which broadcast in Inuktitut, French and English. Heather Hudson, "The Role of Radio in the Canadian North," Journal of Communication, (Autumn, 1979): 131-132.

[38] Gary O. Coldevin, "Satellite Television and Cultural Replacement Among Canadian Eskimos," Communication Research, (April, 1979): 117.

[39] Pat Tourigny, Community TV: A handbook for Northern and Undeveloped Communities, (Ottowa: CRTC, 1983) 3.

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Obstacles to Media Agenda-Setting

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Obstacles to Media Agenda-Setting

Abstract

Data were examined from an investigation in which seven of 60 tests involving two media did not produce agenda-setting effects. Eight reasons for the lack of effects are suggested: 1. Issues became less obtrusive and less sensational; 2. Historical events interceded; 3. Patterns of coverage changed; 4. Public officials interfered; 5. Public retained pet issues; 6. Public influenced media coverage; 7. Media presented conflicting salience cues; 8. Yearly events, such as the State of the Union address and "Sweeps Week," interfered.

Obstacles to Media Agenda-Setting

Since the seminal study examining the agenda-setting function of the news media during the 1968 election (McCombs and Shaw, 1972), the vast majority of studies in this area have provided wide-ranging support for the notion that the mass media influence the perceived salience of issues held by the public. However, even the early studies did not suggest uniform influence by the media over time or across issues. Numerous other variables, such as audience interests and media news values, are "the building blocks of public issues -- which cannot always be predicted (Shaw and Clemmer, 1977, p. 39)."

While it is eminently logical that agenda-setting effects will not occur at a constant level at every instance in time, few investigations have examined the conditions under which agenda-setting does not occur. Examining why agenda-setting effects do not influence the public in some cases, however, could prove to be an important advancement in this theory.

The reasons for the lack of agenda-setting effects on the public could be numerous. News events may occur, for example, which could draw attention away from some issues while highlighting others. The way certain issues are covered by reporters also could enhance or lessen agenda-setting effects.

This study will attempt to isolate potential variables which may intervene in the relationship between the press and public. The study will examine the specific circumstances when agenda-setting effects were not found in an investigation which included 60 tests of the basic agenda-setting hypothesis involving two news media from 1970 to 1986. By examining the conditions under which the press does not perform an agenda-setting function for the public, this study may provide unique insights which would not be evident from the more traditional approaches to investigations of agenda-setting.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

While most research has generally supported the notion of an agenda-setting function of the press, researchers have begun to examine other variables that could enhance or suppress media influence on the issues the public believes are important. Much recent research has concentrated on contingent conditions which may affect the relationship between the press and public. Researchers, for example, have examined audience attributes (Hill, 1985; Tipton, Haney and Basehart, 1975) and message variables (Zucker, 1978). Few studies, however, have argued against the logic of the agenda-setting hypothesis.

Funkhouser (1973) warned about a possible methodological problem with agenda-setting studies. He argued that the methodology employed in agenda-setting studies may be an indirect content analysis of press coverage. Individuals may be perceiving the question of "What is the number one problem facing our country today?" as asking "What is the number one problem you saw in the news media today?"

McLeod, Becker and Byrnes (1974) also cautioned against "the uncritical acceptance of agenda-setting as a broad and unqualified media effect." They compared readers' agendas with the agendas of the two newspapers in Madison, Wisconsin -- the liberal Capitol Times and the conservative Wisconsin State Journal. Hypothesizing that readers of the liberal newspaper would align themselves more with the liberal newspaper's agenda than with the conservative newspaper's agenda, and vice versa, they found agenda-setting operates only under certain conditions. For example, they found no agenda-setting effect for voters under the age of 25, but a strong effect for voters above that age. They concluded the media play a greater political role during between-campaign periods, when interest is lower, competing sources are less prominent, and defenses against influence are relaxed.

Graber (1980) suggested that prominent media coverage, while assuring that an issue will be noticed, does not necessarily guarantee that members of the public will assign to the issue the same relative rank of importance apparent from media play. Agenda-setting effects, she argued, vary in potency.

Weaver (1984), in an review of agenda-setting studies, concluded that the strength of support for the basic agenda-setting hypothesis varies according to what kinds of studies are consulted. Studies using sets of issues and individual-level data -- as was the case in the McLeod et al. study (1974) -- offer much less support for agenda-setting than other types of studies.

These studies questioning the agenda-setting hypothesis have offered some enlightenment into the underlying causes for the lack of agenda-setting effects under some circumstances. This study, however, will attempt to go further in this area.

The research question directing this study, then, is: What are the conditions under which agenda-setting effects do not take place?

METHOD

The time frames examined in this study were determined by the dates during which Gallup polls were conducted asking respondents "What is the number one problem facing our country today?" These polls usually are conducted one to four times a year.

Two such polls from each of the years in the study (1970-1986) were selected to serve as the time frames of examination. Polls were selected so as to systematically balance differences that may have occurred by overselection of certain months. Only one poll was examined for 1970 and 1981 because of methodological problems, leaving 32 polls in the analysis.

Public Agenda: To determine the amount of concern the public had about individual issues, the Gallup polls that asked the question "What is the number one problem facing our country today?" were examined. The aggregate data from these polls formed full agendas of issues which were examined at each of the 32 time periods in the study -- in other words, a Type 1 analysis (McCombs, 1981) in which aggregate data were used to examine a complete agenda of issues. The percentage of respondents polled who stated that an issue was the number one problem facing the country determined the rankings which formed the public agenda.

Some issues were collapsed into more general categories. Because issues such as unemployment, taxes, the U.S. budget deficit and inflation are all ultimately related, these responses were grouped together under the heading "economy." Indeed, some polls did not differentiate between inflation, unemployment or other sub-categories. Since statistical significance is easier to attain with more ranks, it was felt that collapsing some categories would not bias the results.

Since issues that drop off the public agenda are as important to this study as those that rise and fall, it was necessary to include in the analysis the issues that periodically disappeared from the most important problem polls. Therefore, the analysis included issues mentioned in either the poll directly before or the poll directly after each poll analyzed in the study. Since zero percent of the Gallup respondents named them as the number one problem facing our country, these issues that were mentioned in the surrounding polls but not in the specific poll in question, of course, were placed at the bottom of the public agenda. For example, for the poll of May 31-June 3, 1974, the issue of the environment was not mentioned. The environment, however, was mentioned in the previous poll (September 7-10, 1973). Therefore, for the poll of May 31-June 3, the environment was included in the analysis, but placed at the bottom of the public agenda.

News Media Agendas: Two news media were examined. First, the front pages of the New York Times were examined for the four weeks prior to the Gallup polls. The number of front-page stories dealing with the individual issues mentioned in the Gallup polls determined the ranking of issues for the New York Times agenda at each of the 32 time periods examined.

Second, the CBS Evening News broadcasts were coded in a similar fashion, using the Vanderbilt Archives News Abstracts. The number of stories carried by CBS and recorded in the Vanderbilt Archives that dealt with the individual issues mentioned in the Gallup polls in the same time periods determined the ranking of issues for the CBS agenda. Since the Vanderbilt Archives were available for only the years 1972-1986, the CBS agenda was not computed for 1970, 1971 or the first poll of 1972, leaving 28 tests of the agenda-setting hypothesis for CBS.

Approximately 9 percent of the media data were double-coded. Intercoder reliability was .92 for the New York Times and .89 for CBS.

Data Analysis: The methodology employed here produced three sets of agendas at 32 points in time: a public agenda, as determined by the percentage of respondents in the Gallup polls naming specific issues as the number one problem facing our country today; a *New York Times* agenda, as determined by the number of stories on the front pages of the *Times* devoted to specific issues in the four weeks before the Gallup polls; and a CBS agenda, as determined by the number of stories recorded in the Vanderbilt Archives devoted to specific issues in the four weeks before the Gallup polls.

To test the agenda-setting hypothesis, Spearman rank-order correlations were computed to compare the public agendas with the *New York Times* and CBS agendas at each time period in the study. In other words, 32 separate cross-lagged correlations tested the agenda-setting hypothesis for the *New York Times* and 28 separate cross-lagged correlations tested the agenda-setting hypothesis for CBS -- for a total of 60 tests overall. Cross-lagged correlations computed in a similar fashion have been used frequently in previous agenda-setting research (for example, Shaw and McCombs, 1977).

The few instances when agenda-setting effects did not occur then were examined. First, the public agendas were re-examined to determine if any issue rose or dropped substantially. Next, the *New York Times* and *Vanderbilt Archives* were re-examined to determine if any issue received substantial coverage that did not influence the public agenda, or if any issue failed to receive substantial coverage even though public concern on this issue was high. The coverage of these issues was further examined to determine if variables inherent in the coverage were a factor leading to a failure of agenda-setting effects to occur.

Methodological strengths and weaknesses: The methodology employed here, then, was similar to that used in a number of previous agenda-setting studies (For example, see Neuman and Fryling, 1985; Funkhouser, 1973).

The major advantage of the present methodology is that it involves more than one test of the agenda-setting hypothesis. Instead of examining one potential variable with one test of the agenda-setting hypothesis, this study examines several tests in the hopes of finding potential variables that may have interfered with the agenda-setting function of the press.

The major weakness of this study is that it involves post hoc explanations. While post hoc explanations can be dangerous, Hyman (1972) argues that the ends are more important than the means in social science research. Social science phenomena, Hyman argues, should be examined using a variety of methodologies. And, of course, post hoc explanations can become hypotheses for future studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Significant Spearman correlations supporting the agenda-setting hypothesis were found in 30 of the 32 tests of the _New York Times_-public relationship (93.8 percent) and 23 of the 28 tests of the CBS-public relationship (82.1 percent).

Table 1 lists the dates of the Gallup polls when no agenda-setting effects occurred.

Since statistical significance of Spearman rhos depends upon rankings being highly similar, two reasons for the instances of insignificant rhos are apparent. First, one or more issues must have ranked highly on the public agenda despite receiving little coverage in the news media. Second, one or more issues must have ranked near the bottom of the public agenda despite receiving extensive media coverage.

Both of these instances occurred in the present study. In fact, not only did some issues rank low on the public agenda despite extensive media coverage, but in five of the seven cases where no agenda-setting effects were found, the public agenda shrank to only a few issues. In other words, some issues dropped completely off the public agenda, while continuing to receive media coverage. The media and public agendas that did not correlate significantly are included in an appendix.

As poll 2 in the appendix shows, the poll of May 31-June 3, 1974, was a case in point. For this poll, only six issues remained on the public agenda: economy, dissatisfaction with government/corruption in government, the energy crisis, crime, moral decline and drugs. Four issues dropped off the public agenda: international problems, the environment, social problems and human rights. Other issues which received extensive coverage though were not mentioned as an important problem in the Gallup polls include the environment in May 4-7, 1979; crime in February 10-13, 1984; and drugs in January 11-14, 1986.

Some issues, on the other hand, were mentioned relatively often as the most important problem, though they received little media coverage -- for example, energy in February 10-13, 1978; and moral decline and dissatisfaction with government in many cases.

The overall findings could be explained by a number of factors.

1. Issues changed: Some issues may have appeared differently to members of the public at different points in time. The perceived obtrusiveness of an issue, for example, could have changed for members of the public. This may have happened for the poll of May 31-June 3, 1974, when the issue of international problems dropped completely off the public agenda.

Perhaps the issue of international problems became less obtrusive for the public during this time period. The United States was no longer involved in the Vietnam War. In fact, few stories in this time period dealt with relations between the United States and other countries. Most international coverage centered on the Middle East struggle between Israel and the Arab nations, the attempts of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea to gain independence, and political changes in France and Portugal. These events had no direct effect on the American public, as opposed to earlier events in the Vietnam War. Individuals may have been unwilling to claim foreign affairs as an important problem because the news events reported in the media were insignificant compared to the Vietnam War, which could have been lingering in their minds.

Lasorsa and Wanta (1988) support this explanation. They suggest that personal involvement with an issue sensitizes individuals, who seek additional information on the subject from the news media. Perhaps, individuals had no personal involvement with international problems immediately after the Vietnam War and therefore did not seek out other news sources for information on this issue. In turn, individuals were not accessible to agenda-setting effects on this issue.

In addition, international coverage may have become less sensational due to the reduction of conflicts between nations. Only in the Middle East and parts of Africa were there any military struggles, and coverage of these conflicts were sporadic -- in sharp contrast to a few years earlier with the war in Vietnam. Both news media instead provided a great deal of coverage of the French election, the European common market, and President Nixon's visit to Europe and his announcement of an upcoming trip to China -- stories that would be unlikely to kindle concern in individuals.

2. Historical events interceded: News events drew national attention which interfered with the agenda-setting process. For instance, according to the findings, the New York Times did not influence the public agenda in the May 4-7, 1979, poll. However, the Times' coverage in the period before the poll included 29 stories dealing with a major news

event -- the nuclear reactor problem at Three Mile Island. This event drew media attention away from other issues -- most notably the economy. While the economy remained the number one problem in the minds of the Gallup respondents, it trailed international problems, energy and the environment on the newspaper's agenda.

Perhaps an even better example of historical events interfering with the agenda-setting process involved Watergate. This issue -- relatively new for the poll of May 31-June 3, 1974 -- pushed some older issues down or off the public agenda. Extensive coverage of Watergate led to an increase in public concern (as measured by the Gallup polls) -- as the agenda-setting hypothesis predicts. The coverage was revealing, continuous and captivating every day. Those revelations, however, may have distracted the American public from what was happening in such issues as international problems and the environment, which nonetheless continued to receive media coverage.

This notion generally supports the idea of "agenda-building." According to Lang and Lang (1983), the press, public and public officials are engaged in a cycle of mutual reinforcement. Press coverage of an issue leads to public concern. Officials, in turn, respond publicly on this issue, which receives additional media coverage and leads to a further increase in public concern. This cycle continues until one of the actors tires of an issue or a new issue replaces the old.

Perhaps, then, the new issue of Watergate may have replaced the old issues of international problems, the environment and social problems. Furthermore, because of the extensive media coverage of international problems during the Vietnam war, the public may have tired of foreign affairs as an issue, as the notion of agenda-building predicts.

3. The patterns of coverage changed: Certain issues may have received inconsistent coverage in the press, again because of historical events. For example, because of the emergence of Watergate on the press agenda, the news media in 1974 were able to provide only sporadic coverage of other important issues. While Watergate received continuous coverage across the four weeks preceding the May 31-June 3, 1974, Gallup poll, CBS devoted only four stories to the environment. These four stories were spread out across the entire four weeks. So while the media continued to provide some coverage of the issue, because of the lack of consistency in coverage, the issue did not appear to be important to individuals.

Issues that receive isolated, intermittent coverage, then, do not attract sufficient attention from the public so as to influence individuals into naming them as the most important problems facing our country today. Agenda-setting effects on individual issues apparently only result from media emphasis over a long period of time.

Moreover, this explanation points to the need to examine issues in the context of an overall agenda. As Rogers and

Dearing (1988) note, though issues are constantly competing for attention with other issues, most agenda-setting researcher have generally treated individual issues as if they were not dependent on other coverage. The dynamics of agenda-setting suggests that issues are dependent upon other issues for the amount of coverage they receive. When one issue dominates coverage -- as Watergate did -- coverage of other issues must suffer.

4. Public officials intervened: Public officials may have responded to some of the important issues and, therefore, may have drawn attention away from other issues. Lang and Lang (1983) note the importance of public officials in the cycle of consensus building. Responses by public officials on some issues lead to increased coverage by the press which in turn leads to more public concern.

This could again have been true for the poll of May 31-June 3, 1974. Though President Nixon's announcement of his pending trip to China received extensive coverage, he was no longer responding to events in the Vietnam War. Therefore, he reduced his overall emphasis on international problems, which may have given cues to the public that foreign affairs was no longer the most important problem facing our country. Instead, President Nixon emphasized economic initiatives and anti-crime legislation, which rose on the public agenda.

Presidential influence may also have been at work in the poll of February 10-13, 1978, when no agenda-setting effects were found for CBS. . During this period, President Carter devoted a great deal of his attention toward the energy crisis. While energy was the number two problem on the public agenda, it ranked only sixth on the CBS agenda. The public, then, could have received salience cues from a non-media source -- President Carter.

Iyengar and Kinder (1987) offer support for this explanation. They found that presidents can influence the perceived importance of individual issues held by the public, though they need to have a national forum, such as a speech carried nationally by the three national networks. Perhaps President Nixon's emphasis on the economy and crime and President Carter's attention to energy drew public attention away from other issues reported in the news media.

5. The public retained pet issues: The public continued to name some issues as the nation's number one problem simply because they were pet issues. For example, dissatisfaction with government ranked fourth on the public agenda for the poll of February 10-13, 1978, even though no stories dealing with this subject appeared on the CBS Evening News. Similarly, moral decline was an issue mentioned often as a problem in Gallup polls, even though few stories in either media dealt specifically with this topic.

Siune and Borre (1975), in their study of a Danish election, also concluded that members of the public are reluctant to discard pet issues. They suggest that the media-public relationship is based on "persuasion tempered by persistence."

6. The public influenced the media agenda: Possibly, under some conditions, the direction of agenda-setting effects can reverse and public concern on issues can influence the amount of coverage these issues receive in the press.

A secondary analysis shows some support for this explanation. Media agendas were computed from the amount of coverage issues received in the four weeks after the Gallup polls. These post-poll media agendas were then used to test the possibility of public influence on the press. In other words, cross-lagged correlations were computed testing public influence on the news media.

Of the seven instances where media agenda-setting effects were not found, three post-poll agendas did correlate significantly with the public agenda (CBS poll of February 16-19, 1973, $r = .58$, $p < .05$; CBS poll of February 10-13, 1978, $r = .65$, $p < .05$; and CBS poll of January 11-14, 1986, $r = .59$, $p < .05$). In other words, though the public agenda did not correlate significantly with previous media coverage in seven instances, the public agenda did correlate significantly with subsequent media coverage in three of these cases. Two specific issues especially appear to have received extensive media coverage only after a rise in public concern: drugs in February 16-19, 1973; and energy in February 10-13, 1978. Possibly, then, the public set the press agenda for these issues in these time periods.

7. The media presented conflicting salience cues: Though two tests of New York Times influence on the public and five tests of CBS influence on the public did not produce agenda-setting effects, only once did the lack of effects of the two media coincide (the poll of May 31-June 3, 1974). Therefore, perhaps the print media and broadcast media interfered with each other in some instances.

Though previous research suggests that newspapers and networks present highly similar issue agendas (See Riffe, Ellis, Rogers, Van Ommeren and Woodman, 1986; Shaw, 1979), their coverage apparently also can vary. It follows, then, that when media agendas conflict, their influence on the public will differ.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) also noted that the composite agenda of all news media in their study produced the highest correlations. Indeed, in five of the seven cases where agenda-setting effects were not found, the composite New York Times-CBS agenda did correlate significantly with the public agenda. The only exception was the instance where neither the Times nor CBS correlated with the public agenda (the poll of May 31-June 4, 1974).

8. Yearly cycles influenced media coverage: Of the five instances where CBS did not have an agenda-setting influence on the public, three occurred in mid-February (polls of February 16-19, 1973; February 10-13, 1978; February 10-13, 1984). These were the only polls included in the study that were conducted entirely in the month of February.

Historical factors inherent in February, then, may have affected the results. Two factors seem especially plausible.

First, the president delivers his State of the Union address in late-January or early-February. Presidents, then, may have continued after the speech to push for their priorities, which in turn may have influenced news media coverage of issues. In addition, the president annually presents his budget to Congress in this time period. Coverage of the debate surrounding the budget may have pushed economic concerns higher on the news media agenda. Again, the president may have played a key role in reducing agenda-setting effects of the press on the public.

Second, "Sweeps Week" occurs in early February of every year. Since advertising rates are determined by the rankings of each network's broadcasts, CBS and the other networks may have altered their coverage patterns in an attempt to attract a larger share of the news audience. Ecomonic factors, then, may have come into play.

Indeed, CBS did run a "Special Report" during the early February time periods when agenda-setting effects were not found. These reports dealt with freedom of the press in 1973, airline safety in 1978 and the influence of the electronic media on political campaigns in 1984, all of which were more human interest stories than hard news reports and were unlikely to influence the public into believing these issues were the most important problems facing our country. CBS also broadcast a number of other human interest stories, dealing with a black market operated by Chicago dog catchers, a lab custodian convicted of theft for setting free dolphins used in experimentation, and a motorist who committed suicide when he was unable to flag down help on a highway in Wyoming.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings point to the need for further research in four important areas.

First, researchers should further examine message variables that may enhance or suppress agenda-setting effects. The degree of sensationalism within the content of stories or the perceived obtrusiveness of issues, for example, could be just two variables that play an important role in influencing the perceived salience of issues held by members of the public. Research of message variables in agenda-setting, however, has been surprisingly lacking (for exceptions, see Zucker, 1978; Williams, Shapiro and Cutbirth, 1983).

Second, potential intervening sources of information should be further examined. The influence of public officials, such as the U.S. president, on the agendas of the news media and public has only recently been studied systematically (See Wanta, Stephenson, Turk and McCombs, 1989). The effects of important news events on subsequent coverage also deserves further investigation. Perhaps researchers investigating who sets the press agenda are examining the wrong question. Possibly the real question is what sets the press agenda -- and the answer is events.

Events may remind the media that an issue is important, and the press may respond with increased coverage in this area.

Third, the effects of economic factors on news selection deserve more attention from researchers. Media in competitive markets, for example, could have vastly different issue agendas than monopolistic media. Competing media may attempt to attract larger audiences with more human interest and sensational stories, which could in turn lessen their agenda-setting influence on the public. Furthermore, media in times of high competition also may alter their coverage with the hopes of attracting consumers.

Fourth, respondent variables need to be studied further. For example, an examination of why some individuals adhere closely to pet issues such as dissatisfaction with government or moral decline would be a logical future study. The conditions under which public concern can influence media coverage also bears closer scrutiny. If the public can influence the press agenda in some cases, then the question arises: Where did the public learn salience cues on issues, if not from the press?

Overall, then, though the basic agenda-setting hypothesis was supported in all but seven of the 60 tests in the present study, many variables that could affect the magnitude of influence remain unexplored. These four areas seem to have the potential for fruitful research in the future.

Table 1. Gallup polls where agenda-setting effects were not found.

	Date	Media	r
1.	Feb. 16-19, 1973	CBS	.11
2.	May 31-June 3, 1974	NYT	.51
	May 31-June 3, 1974	CBS	.41
3.	Feb. 10-13, 1978	CBS	.49
4.	May 4-7, 1979	NYT	.52
5.	Feb. 10-13, 1984	CBS	.57
6.	Jan. 11-14, 1986	CBS	.54

APPENDIX

Media and public agendas which did not produce significant correlations.

Poll 1 (Feb. 16-19, 1973)

Rank	CBS Agenda	Public Agenda
1.	International Problems	Economy
2.	Economy	Social Problems
3.	Energy	Drugs
4.	Human Rights/ Race relations	International Problems
5.	Crime	Crime
6.	Pollution	Human Rights/ Race relations
7.	Social Problems	Pollution
8.	Moral Decline	Unrest in nation
9.	Drugs	Moral Decline
10.	Unrest in nation	Energy

Poll 2 (May 31-June 3, 1974)

Rank	CBS Agenda	NYT Agenda	Public Agenda
1.	Gov't Corruption	Foreign Affairs	Economy
2.	Foreign Affairs	Gov't Corruption	Gov't Corruption
3.	Economy	Economy	Energy
4.	Crime	Crime	Crime
5.	Human Rights	Energy	Moral Decline
6.	Energy	Moral Decline	Drugs
7.	Social Problems	Social Problems	
8.	Environment	Human Rights	
9.	Moral Decline	Environment	
10.	Drugs	Drugs	

Poll 3 (Feb. 10-13, 1978)

Rank	CBS Agenda	Public Agenda
1.	International Problems	Economy
2.	Economy	Energy
3.	Crime	International Problems
4.	Moral Decline	Crime (tie)
5.	Energy	Dissastifaction w/government (tie)
6.	Race Relations	Moral Decline
7.	Social Problems	Drugs (tie)
8.	Environment	Social Problems (tie)
9.	Drugs	Race Relations

Poll 4 (May 4-7, 1979)

Rank	NYT Agenda	Public Agenda
1.	International Problems	Economy
2.	Energy	Energy
3.	Environment	International Problems
4.	Economy	Moral Problems
5.	Human Rights	Dissatisfaction w/government
6.	Crime	Moral Decline
7.	Moral Decline	Crime
8.	Social Problems	
9.	Drugs	

Poll 5 (Feb. 10-13, 1984)

Rank	CBS Agenda	Public Agenda
1.	International Problems	Economy
2.	Economy	International Problems
3.	Crime	Dissatisfaction w/government
4.	Environment	Moral Decline
5.	Human Rights	
6.	Drugs	
7.	Moral Decline	
8.	Social Problems	
9.	Energy	
10.	Dissatisfaction w/government	

Poll 6 (Jan. 11-14, 1986)

Rank	CBS Agenda	Public Agenda
1.	International Problems	Economy
2.	Economy	International Problems
3.	Crime	Social Problems
4.	Social Problems	Moral Decline
5.	Drugs	Crime
6.	Environment	
7.	Human Rights	
8.	Moral Decline	
9.	Energy	

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THE POLITICS OF BROADCAST DEREGULATION: BEYOND KRASNOW, LONGLEY, AND TERRY'S "BROADCAST POLICY-MAKING SYSTEM"

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Introduction

It stands to reason that deregulation came to communications and broadcasting as part of larger, interrelated movements to free American industry of regulation. How it is that industry came to be regulated in the first place is a history, as Donald Baker observed, of complexity, confusion and a great deal of law.[1] However, as Robert Horwitz suggested, various regulations were implemented in three distinctive political eras of American history with different missions: the Progressive era regulations to relieve the economic and social instability caused by the large corporation and its tremendous transformation of social and economic life[2]; the New Deal era regulations to provide post-Depression market stability and producer protection[3]; and the Great Society era regulations to enhance the values and interests of consumers and citizens.[4]

Deregulation, or partial deregulation, indeed was accomplished in a number of industries in the 1970s and 1980s: airlines, trucking, railroads, telecommunications, banking, oil, and natural gas.[5] As Horwitz has pointed out, deregulation mostly affected the New Deal's handiwork on "infrastructural" industries, against those industries' "hostile and vociferous objections," and not the social regulatory agencies "so reviled by business" in general.[6] Although the economic case against New Deal regulation is easy to grasp, most regulatory analysts would not have predicted the accomplishment of deregulation, because of the political clout the protected industries, the diffused interest of consumers, and because of the widely observed favoring of regulatory agencies for "the quiet life." Scholars have tried to offer an explanation of this puzzling phenomenon.[7] However, just as regulation had been imposed for a variety of different reasons to serve a range of different purposes, so has it been taken away. George Wilson wrote, "In short, just as there is no theory of regulation, there is no theory of deregulation in the sense of explaining, in general, either when deregulation should or will occur or the extent to which it should or will be carried out."[8]

Research on broadcast deregulation is a demanding topic. Besides taking "a deep bite out of traditional communications law"[9] and thus making many a textbook and set of lecture notes obsolete, deregulation has implications for the economic structure and performance of the industry. Further, any new trend in broadcasting, because of its undeniably important socio-cultural and political roles in American society, is of profound concern.

Much of the research to date has principally described the content of deregulation and explored its socio-cultural implications.[10] As Mosco points out, descriptive research is useful in keeping us abreast of developments in technology, services, and changes in the players and their relationships. However, the lack of analytic focus leads to simplistic conclusions.[11]

Research of deregulation in broadcasting as a phenomenon that needs to be described and explained--Why did deregulation occur? How was it accomplished?--has been an ad hoc effort. Two of the most prominent ways to explain broadcast deregulation have been the proliferation of new technologies and the rise of the new leadership in the FCC. However, the question of deregulation needs to be asked within a theoretical framework. One strategy to bring a theoretical approach to the study of deregulation is to adapt theories of regulation. Erwin G. Krasnow, Lawrence Longley, and Herbert A. Terry, the authors of the leading model of broadcast regulation, the "Broadcast Policy-Making System," have suggested that it was amenable to such an approach. This study therefore pursued an examination of deregulation through Krasnow, Longley, and Terry.

`Broadcast Policy-Making System Model'

In their book, The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, Krasnow, Longley, and Terry have made one of the most ambitious attempts at theorizing the broadcast policymaking process.[12] Their "Broadcast Policy-Making System" model, which has been described both as "seminal"[13] and "the leading work,"[14] deserves much of the credit for moving theorizing in the area of broadcast policymaking processes along the path of expanded scope and greater sophistication. Its principal aims were to "order and simplify political life so that we can think about it more clearly and understand the relationships we find in the real world," and to suggest explanations of public policy.[15] As Krasnow, Longley, and Terry put it, they want to know "Who gets what and how?" in broadcast policymaking.

The two key concepts in the model are participants, or "determiners" of regulatory policy, as Krasnow, Longley, and Terry put it, and the manner of interaction. The FCC, the industry, citizen groups, the court, the White House, and Congress constitute the participant groups. From the perspective of the model, the participants are distinguished by their different goals, or their expectations about resource allocation that they bring to the policymaking process. Regulation, or what Krasnow, Longley, and Terry call "policy decisions," is the output of interaction in the model. The key characteristic of regulation, according to the model, is its incrementalism, a function of a policymaking process that "more often moves slowly in small steps than quickly in large leaps."[16] Participants pursue their goals and expectations through a wide variety of strategies, which results in an extremely complex pattern of interactions. The most important interactions, "the primary channels of influence, information, and contact," are those between the FCC, the industry and Congress; with the White House, the courts, and citizen groups usually playing "a less immediate, sustained, and direct role."[17] Therefore, participants can be considered to have unequal strengths in their interaction.[18] However, Krasnow, Longley, and Terry do not see any one participant consistently dominating the policymaking process. Rather, "coalitions of diverse participants work together and reward those belonging to them."[19] The process of interaction, in fact, might be best understood as a process of "mutual accommodation," or "consensual, majority-seeking activities."[20]

Despite some criticism,[21] the model is undoubtedly the most frequently referred model in the broadcast regulation literature and the book is a popular textbook. What is the relevance of the model in the era of deregulation? Interestingly, yet largely unnoticed by the scholarly community, Krasnow, Longley, and Terry have made the claim that their model is adequate to explain broadcast deregulation as well as broadcast regulation. In the 1982 edition of The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, the authors acknowledge that both broadcasting and regulation had changed since 1973 when the first edition of the book was published.[22] Despite the change in the meaning of broadcasting and regulation, the authors argued that their model remained durable: "[A]s a basic framework for analyzing broadcast regulation, we have found it still satisfactory."[23] This durability is accomplished, partly, by conceptualizing deregulation as regulation. In a discussion of what constitutes the "output" of their model, Krasnow, Longley, and Terry wrote: "Outputs may even take the form of decisions not to do something, exemplified by recent trends in `deregulation.'"[24] It is also accomplished by the assumption that the process through which such deregulatory decisions were reached was the same as the one through which regulatory decisions had been reached. They make this claim in their assertion that deregulation "will not be implemented in broadcasting from outside the current policy-making system but rather through it."[25]

The empirical work of Krasnow, Longley, and Terry and several other scholars with the "Broadcast Policy-Making System Model" suggest that there is some good support for political bargaining perspective of broadcast _regulation_. But the advent of broadcast _deregulation_, however, might pose some challenges. This is an issue that Krasnow, Longley, and Terry can be fairly said to have sidestepped as much as possible. First, they have offered no revision of _The Politics of Broadcasting Regulation_ since 1982. And second, in that edition of the book they barely mention it as a topic. This can be theoretically justified, to a certain extent, by their contention that deregulation and regulation are continuous phenomena[26] governed by the same processes.[27] Thankfully, for the authors, the politics remains. "Whatever happens in the future will certainly be the results of a political process."[28] But does the model adequately explain the process of deregulation?

Description of Case Study

In order to see whether the "Broadcast Policy-Making System" model is congruent with the reality of deregulatory broadcast policymaking, the rulemaking process of Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) was analyzed with three key concepts of the model: participants, patterns of interaction, and policy output.

One of the most important dimensions of the deregulation of broadcasting has been the pro-competitive introduction of new technologies. It seems reasonable, therefore, that an examination of the policymaking for a new technology such as DBS, a video technology that delivers signals from very powerful satellites directly to households, by-passing local transmission towers or stations, would be a good way to explore the process of deregulatory policymaking.

The timing of DBS policymaking, with decisions being made between 1980 (release of the Notice of Inquiry) and 1982 (release of the Report and Order), makes it even more valuable as a case study.[29] The time period marked the FCC's transition to deregulation. If one were to seek to observe possible fissures in the policymaking process, such a transitional period would be a strategic place to investigate.

As the sources of data, this project used three kinds of government documents: the FCC docket, the Congressional hearing record, and the Court decision. The documents of the DBS rulemaking proceeding are filed in the FCC General Docket number 80-603. Only the public notices such as Notice of Inquiry, Notice of Proposed Policy Statement and Rulemaking, and Report and Order are published in the Federal Register and/or the FCC Reports.[30] In order to see the entire docket including comments filed by participants, this researcher visited the FCC Docket Reference Room located in Washington, D.C.[31]

Since some parties challenged the legality of the DBS authorization and argued that the Congress, which holds the ultimate legislative power over communication matters in the United States, should guide this proceedings, the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications Consumer Protection and Finance of the Committee on Energy and Commerce held the Hearing on Satellite Communications/Direct Broadcast Satellites on December 15, 1981. The published record of the hearing was consulted.

Ultimately, a court case developed out of DBS policymaking. The published opinion of the U.S. Court of Appeals on the NAB v. FCC (1984) was also a source of data.

It would be naive to think that the official record of the Federal Communications Commission can provide an adequate window to the political processes of DBS policy making. For this reason, Broadcasting, the leading trade publication of the broadcasting industry, noted for its close following of the FCC,[32] was also used as a source of data.

Findings: The Politics of Broadcast Deregulation

Krasnow and Longley closed the preface to the 1978 edition of The Politics of Broadcast Regulation with the message, "Be advised that the book you hold in your hands represents our best shot at a moving target."[33] In 1982 they wrote:

> That advice bears repeating, but with the modification that the target is not only a moving one but one that, like the caterpillar and the butterfly (or the alien spaceship in a video game),

> may be capable of some radical metamorphoses in the not too distant future.[34]

The findings for this study suggest that deregulation brought the "radical metamorphoses" to the policymaking process that the authors had suspected. The politics of broadcast deregulation seemed to have a significantly different dynamic.

Participants

Research in broadcast policymaking has turned again and again to the question of who makes the policy. The recognition of an increasingly complex cast of policymaking players is one of the innovations of Krasnow, Longley, and Terry, but a changing reality here seems to be also contributing to a crisis in the model.

Krasnow, Longley, and Terry's model specifies six interest groups that participate most significantly in the formation of broadcast policy, with Congress, the FCC and the broadcasting industry forming a primary tier, and citizen groups, the court, and the White House, forming a secondary tier. In the case of DBS rulemaking, all of the six groups were present. However, the groups of participants were more complicated than the model would have predicted: at least nine distinctive groups were identified. They were (1) DBS contenders; (2) Current users of 12 GHz spectrum (the operation of DBS service required the use of the spectrum which was already occupied by various users); (3) Over-the-air commercial television broadcasters; (4) Pay-TV operators; (5) Communication equipment manufacturers; (6) Public interest organizations; (7) Common-carriers; (8) Government (excluding the FCC, Congress, and the court); and (9) Individual citizens.

At issue in the model's roster is (1) which interest groups are making showings in the policymaking process and (2) the power they wield. The DBS case suggests that it is increasingly difficult to make sense out of the policymaking players through Krasnow, Longley, and Terry's six-participant grid. What has caused most of the problems for their approach to the policymaking participants is that the rise of new technologies has created new industry constituencies and new conflicts among industry constituencies, all of which serve to complicate the political landscape. Yet, the model attempts to smooth this emerging problem under an existing label: "industry."

The original conception of "industry" in the model was that of the established broadcasting services. But with the explosion of the video market, the blurring of technological categories, and the increasingly intense demand for spectrum space, a new "beyond broadcasting" reality is posing serious challenges to the model. In DBS policymaking, competing video interests (potential DBS operators, networks, local station owners, noncommercial television, and to a small extent Pay-TV), competing common carriers, and competing spectrum users (allied with the manufacturers who supply their equipment) have to be accommodated within the "industry" category. And they do not fit well.

Character of Policy Output

Over much objection from the over-the-air commercial television broadcasters and current 12 GHz spectrum users, the FCC gave a green light to DBS industry by issuing the DBS Report and Order. The commission, over the objection from the public interest groups and citizens, set out a minimum regulatory principle for DBS. The technology was set free from traditional regulations such as ownership restrictions, content regulations, and access requirements and subject only to minimal technical regulation.[35]

Krasnow, Longley, and Terry have argued that deregulation should be understood as the other side of the regulation coin. Both are outputs of the policymaking system, and share general characteristics.[36] The most significant characteristic of these outputs, according to the authors, is that they are incremental or gradual. Outputs represent "small steps" not "large leaps,"[37] such that broadcast policy as a whole is considered to be conservative or reactive.

Technological innovations under the previous policymaking process, as both, the Krasnow, Longley, and Terry case study of UHF TV[38] and the Mosco study of FM radio, UHF TV, cable, and STV[39] show, were victims of FCC incrementalism: policymaking that allowed for the development of new services, but as ancillaries to the dominant services. As Krasnow, Longley, and Terry wrote: "[T]he FCC has not been highly successful at giving birth to new communications services. At times, in fact, it has almost destroyed them."[40]

Generally seen by all except the entrenched broadcasters and their allies as undesirable, the FCC's incrementalism in policymaking for new technologies has brought much criticism, and has served as one of the focal points for those urging deregulation. The Office of Telecommunications Management under the Nixon Administration wrote in support of deregulation in 1969 that regulation is

> not enough to bring about the introduction and use of equipment designed to higher standards to conserve spectrum space or to make extensive changes to benefit another user in the interests of efficient use of the spectrum. . . . Regulatory pressure will never match the rewards that could come from self-motivated research stimulated by direct economic benefit.[41]

In the 1982 edition of The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, Krasnow, Longley, and Terry acknowledged that the FCC's posture on technological innovation had changed. Where once the FCC, supported by the broadcasters, "sought to limit the growth of technology rather than use technological innovations as correctives to problems," it then "adopted policies designed to foster technological growth as a way of promoting greater competition in the marketplace and a greater diversity of services."[42] But what the authors did not acknowledge is that the new technologically fostering policies had a significantly different character than those of the old limiting policies.

The principal characteristic of the DBS policy was radicalism, not incrementalism. The only assumption not set aside was a faith and commitment to commercial broadcasting as the dominant system in the United States. DBS policy involved, first, the rejection of the long-standing doctrine of localism. Although in practice localism is largely a myth, due to the long standing dominance of national programming on "local" stations, one would be hard-pressed to nominate any other myth that had longer guided FCC actions. Yet in DBS policymaking localism was set aside and broadcasters reminded that localism was a philosophical commitment made by previous commissions that could and was being set aside.

Second, DBS policy gave no concessions to the existing broadcast services nor to the existing 12 GHz spectrum users. Reasonable cases could have been made, as they had so often in the past, for such accommodation. In the late 1970s, broadcasters were already losing their share of the video audience, and the FCC could have made a commitment to not further undermine free over-the-air service. The existing 12 GHz users were organizations such as schools, hospitals and police, all of whose services could have been easily justified.

Third, and perhaps most radical of all, DBS policy left it to the operator to decide to what purpose the technology would be put: common carrier, broadcasting, or hybrid, and, thus, how it would be regulated. Although no one would argue that the technology-shaping decisions the FCC had made in the past were far-thinking and insightful, the agency had at least made an effort.

Patterns of Interaction

The commitment of Krasnow, Longley, and Terry to a pluralistic conception of politics emerges in the patterns of interaction their model posits among participants. Such interaction is marked by the clash of conflicting goals of participants who are unequal, but also unable to dominate, and who thus must ally themselves and negotiate with other coalitions, seeking mutual accommodation. The result of this process is incremental policy.

If, however, incremental policy does not emerge, it might suggest a different kind of interaction pattern at work. In the DBS case, much of the behavior the Krasnow, Longley, and Terry model would predict was apparent. The two leading commercial interests provide good examples. Once Comsat had announced its plans to develop a DBS system, the broadcasters began their highly visible and vocal opposition to the introduction of the new technology. While making appeals to the FCC, they sought to build alliances with Congress, with the White House, with the 12 GHz users, and finally, made an appeal to the D.C. Circuit Court. When it became clear that DBS could not be stopped outright, despite a raft of reasonable justifications for doing so, the broadcasters rallied behind the traditional new technology compromise: ancillary today, but dominant in the future (using DBS for the transmission of HDTV).

Although this cannot be said for every DBS contender, the leading voice for DBS, Comsat, was for the most part a model of compromise: it offered that its DBS service be regulated just like broadcasters, undertook an ascertainment study, and even cut a generous deal with a leading black advocacy group; it made numerous assurances to broadcasters that it did not have head-to-head competition in mind; and it supported a proposal to help the nonprofit 12 GHz users relocate to another spectrum location.

But the FCC did not take the position of arbiter in DBS policy, and instead of pressuring the agency, Congress was deferential, even approving. Its initial position was unambiguously in favor of an unregulated DBS, and this position was not tempered throughout the policymaking process until the ruling by the court. The policy that the FCC issued on DBS was in all essential points the policy developed by the FCC staff: a hardline deregulatory approach to DBS. There was no mutual accommodation, there was no compromise, even though several very reasonable compromise strategies had been advanced by other participants.

Discussion

Krasnow, Longley, and Terry, revealing a commitment to a general theory of regulation, attempted to embrace deregulation in their "Broadcast Policy-Making System" model. The findings of this study of direct broadcast satellite suggest this cannot be done. How then should the retheorizing proceed?

To start with, it should be remembered that the model has a great deal of empirical support with respect to broadcast regulation. Numerous studies of the FCC have documented that the typical FCC policy has been an incremental one and the process has been one of bargaining or interest-balancing. That is, it is generally understood that the FCC long regulated broadcasting by working out compromises between the various groups that made demands on it.

The key to the retheorization is that the FCC had long regulated broadcasting in this way. And this stability in the FCC's approach served to blind many scholars to the significant changes taking place in the policymaking process during the deregulatory era. Specifically, what seems to have happened in the model is that the FCC's approach during a certain historical moment, to bargain with a set of groups making demands on this or that policy, has been reified as the general process of policymaking. With deregulation, it seems a different approach with a different process has been taken. Thus, broadcast policymaking might be most meaningfully understood as having developed historically, with certain processes characteristic of certain periods of time. Instead of denying such differences or losing them altogether in a general model, they can be explored. Does it really make sense for policymaking processes to remain static? If not, why is there a need for an all-purpose timeless theory?

Pinpointing the general process of broadcast regulation has been an important goal of Krasnow, Longley, and Terry. The following is a typical expression of their commitment to general theory:

> It would be marvelous if there were an agreed upon general theory of the politics of regulation that

> incorporated the behavior of all the significant determiner groups. Unfortunately, as yet no such accepted theory exists. Theories are easier to develop and test for simple laboratory-like phenomena than for more complex events and systems. . . . This lack of agreement on a general theory, however, does not mean that the attempt to gain at least some systematic understanding of the broadcast regulatory process is futile. It simply means that the objective is not quite what it would be if there were a unified theory.[43]

Yet, the very premise of the Krasnow, Longley, and Terry model shows that they have not been totally insensitive to changing historical conditions. Longley's 1969 dissertation, which provided the foundation of the model, argued that a policymaking troika, composed of the FCC, Congress, and the broadcast industry, together bargained out broadcast policy.[44] The innovation was to give Congress and the broadcasting industry a prominent role, against the arguments of the independent commission theorists.

But in their first edition of The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, Krasnow and Longley had modified the argument to include a more complex array of participants. As they explained, in the early days of broadcast regulation,

> the regulatory process was dominated by (and largely restricted to) three major participants--Congress, the FCC, and the industry itself . . . but this balance of forces which prevailed for so long has been altered in the past decade by the increased involvement of three participants in broadcast regulation [citizen groups, the Courts, White House]. Together, the development of these three activist participants in broadcast regulation has modified the Commission's role from one of making peace with Congress and a dominant industry to one of attempting to placate several often antagonistic interests.[45]

With this revision, Krasnow, Longley, and Terry noted an incrementally new era of broadcast regulation stemming from a more complicated bargaining-out process. Although the authors show an unwillingness to grapple with it, evident in their approach to defining the "industry" participant in the model, with the rise of new technologies and new constituencies the number of interests continued to multiply. It is suggested here that deregulation marks the abandonment by the FCC of the approach of bargaining with the groups exerting pressure on it, for a different approach.

The retheorizing of broadcast regulation proposed here begins by returning to the FCC as the theoretical point of departure. Although the FCC does not operate independently, it is at the FCC nonetheless where policy is made. How the institution goes about making that policy, how those approaches have changed over time, and why, are the central theoretical issues.

From this perspective, Krasnow, Longley, and Terry's model is useful as a rendering of how the FCC went about making policy for a period of "regulation." In the era of "deregulation," the FCC took a different approach to policymaking, taking its cues from economic theory and not constituency demands. The less ambiguous goals of open entry and competition gave policy its shape.

Why certain approaches come to be taken by the FCC at specific historical moments is the next question for broadcast regulation theorists. Here, too, some recovery of a kernel of insight from Krasnow, Longley, and Terry can be made. Certainly, there is a political-economic dimension to such an explanation as to why deregulation became the best strategy for the FCC. But other dimensions should be explored as well, and the aim of theorists should be to braid together alternative explanations for a more comprehensive understanding. For example, an organizational or occupational culture explanation for why an economic-theory approach to broadcast regulation was taken would examine the changing composition of the FCC's staff which concurrent with the promotion of a deregulatory approach, saw efficiency-minded economists and not equity-minded lawyers in positions of staff power. Another base of explanatory power may lie, as Tom Streeter has suggested, in the culture, ideas, and the shifting formations of discourses.[46]

Notes

1. Donald I. Baker, "A Comment on the Deregulation of Industry," Indiana Law Journal 51 (1976): 752.

2. Robert Horwitz, The Irony of Regulatory Reform (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 10.

3. Ibid., 10 and 65-69.

4. Ibid., 10 and 69-76.

5. Michael D. Reagan, Regulation (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987) 73.

6. Horwitz 6.

7. Martha Derthick and Paul Quirk, who studied the deregulation of airlines, trucking and telephones, offered an explanation of deregulatory success that has three principal elements: "The fit between a well-developed analytic prescription and the need of politicians for positions that were responsible to current public concerns (inflation and intrusive government), appealing on ideological grounds, and easy to comprehend and explain; the presence of leadership roles and institutions, especially the commissions and courts, that facilitated action; and the difficulty encountered by the affected interests, though mobilized in opposition, in converting economic resources effectively to political use." Martha Derthick and Paul J. Quirk, The Politics of Deregulation (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1985) 245.

8. George W. Wilson, "Deregulation: How Far Should It Go," Indiana Law Journal 51 (1976): 709.

9. Richard E. Wiley and Richard M. Neustadt, "U.S. Communications Policy in the New Decade," Journal of Communication 32 (1982): 23.

10. See, for example, Dale Kunkel, "From a Raised Eyebrow to a Turned Back: The FCC and Children's Product-Related Programming," Journal of Communication 38 (1988): 90-108; Ferrall; Benjamin J. Bates, "Deregulation and Station Trafficking," Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media 33 (1989): 317-323.

11. Vincent Mosco, "Toward a Theory of State and Telecommunications Policy," Journal of Communication 38.1 (1988): 107.

12. Terry joined as third author in the book's third edition. However, the model was developed by Krasnow and Longley, a revision of Longley's dissertation, "The Politics of Broadcasting: Industry, Congress, and the F.C.C." Diss. (Vanderbilt University, 1969).

13. Frank Kahn, rev. of Reluctant Regulators, by Barry Cole and Mal Oettinger and The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, 2nd ed., by Krasnow, and Longley, Journal of Broadcasting 22 (1978): 390; Denise M. Trauth and John L. Huffman, "A Case Study of a Difference in Perspectives: The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals and the FCC," Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media 33 (1989): 268.

14. James Michael Kendrick, "The F.C.C. and Low-Power Television: Managing the New Gold Rush," Rutgers Law Review 36 (1983/1984): 233.

15. Thomas R. Dye, Understanding Public Policy, 6th ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1965) 43.

16. Krasnow, Longley, and Terry 281.

17. Ibid. 135.

18. Ibid. 139.

19. Ibid. 139.

20. Ibid. 140.

21. Caren Deming, Rev. of The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, 2nd ed., by Krasnow and Longley, Comm/Ent 2 (1979): 258-259; Ralph Edward Carmode, "An Analysis of the Broadcast Policy-Making System and its Application to Federal Communications Commission Docket 20735," diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1986; Elizabeth Mahan and Jorge Reina Schement. "The Broadcast Regulatory Process: Toward a New Analytical Framework," Progress in Communication Sciences, Vol. IV. eds. Brenda Dervin and Melvin J. Voight. (Norwood: Ablex, 1984) 1-21; Milan Meeske, rev. of The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, by Krasnow and Terry, and The Politics of Broadcasting, ed. Marvin Barrett, Quarterly Journal of Speech 59 (December 1973): 486-487; Dominic Monahan, rev. of The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, by Krasnow and Longley, Federal Communications Bar Journal 26 (1973): 79-80; David Paul Nord, "The FCC, Educational Broadcasting, and Political Interest Group Activity," Journal of Broadcasting 22 (1978): 321-338; and David E. Tucker and Jeffrey Safelle, "The Federal Communications Commission and the Regulation of Children's Television," Journal of Broadcasting 26 (1982): 657-669.

22. Krasnow, Longley, and Terry vii-viii.

23. Ibid. ix.

24. Ibid. 137.

25. Ibid. 284.

26. Ibid. 137.

27. Ibid. 284.

28. Ibid. viii.

29. FCC, Notice of Inquiry. "Inquiry into the Development of Regulatory Policy in Regard to Direct Broadcast Satellite for the Period Following the 1983 Regional Administrative Radio Conference." General Docket No. 80-603, 45 FR 72719 (November 3, 1980); Notice of Proposed Policy Statement and Rulemaking. "Inquiry into the Development of Regulatory Policy in Regard to Direct Broadcast Satellite for the Period Following the 1983 Regional Administrative Radio Conference." General Docket No. 80-603. 86 FCC 2d 719 (June 1, 1981); and Report and Order. "Inquiry into the Development of Regulatory Policy in Regard to Direct Broadcast Satellite for the Period Following the 1983 Regional Administrative Radio Conference." General Docket No. 80-603, 90 FCC 2d 676 (July 14, 1982).

30. Beginning October 1, 1986, FCC Reports was replaced by FCC Record.

31. The trip was made in October 1987. Fortunately, the several-year-old Docket was still being kept in the FCC Washington D.C. office. The public reference room of the FCC, which had about 40 chairs, several big tables, several copy machines, a copy center, and a public telephone, was almost always very crowded with "regulars" from communication law firms during my two-week visit.

32. Newton N. Minow, preface, The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, Erwin G. Krasnow and Lawrence Longley (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973) n.p.

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Priming citizens' vote choices: The effects of campaign news

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Priming citizens' vote choices: The effects of campaign news

Abstract

Utilizing data from a series of national cross-sections during the 1988 general election, this study demonstrates that the presidential campaign differentially primed campaign-specific information. As the campaign unfolded, campaign-related comments became increasingly important predictors of candidate evaluations, which are closely related to the vote. This study expands the meaning of priming from particular issues to refer to the whole set of themes that are emphasized during a presidential election campaign.

Priming citizens' vote choices: The effects of campaign news

Journalistic interpretations of the 1988 presidential race such as Germond and Witcover (1989) assert that Dukakis' fate was settled by the Bush campaign's deft manipulation of the news media, especially television. Bush was seen nightly on the network news attacking Dukakis on issues that had little relevance to the presidency -- most notably the pledge of allegiance and the prison-furlough program -- at carefully arranged "camera-ready" settings (Germond & Witcover, 1989). According to Gallup (1988), the success of the Bush campaign was based on making liberalism, the pledge of allegiance and the prison-furlough controversy salient, while at the same time making Bush's vulnerabilities of less relative importance. These observations suggest that the issues stressed by the media became the considerations voters used in evaluating the candidates. The media, therefore, may have played an important role in the 1988 presidential election by determining the standards citizens used to form vote choices. Utilizing a series of national cross-sections during the 1988 general election, this study examines the process whereby campaign themes affect individuals' evaluations of the candidates.

Theoretical Framework

Modern American presidential campaigns are waged primarily through the mass media. During a fall presidential election campaign an American would have to go to some lengths to avoid exposure to the many political advertisements and news stories that are broadcast. Campaign news is also increasingly prominent in print media as election day approaches. Voters process information from the mass media and use that information along with politically relevant memories to form judgments about the candidates (Brody, 1986). These judgments have been found to be a source of the vote (Brody & Page, 1973; Kelley & Mirer, 1974). Because partisanship has been declining since the 1950s, both in absolute terms and in the power of party identification to predict voting behavior (Nie, Verba & Petrocik, 1976), ubiquitous campaign exposure likely plays an important role in shaping voters' evaluations of candidates. Because ideas that come to mind first readily influence judgment (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), it is likely that the topics stressed in the media during a presidential campaign form the bases for attitudes toward candidates and thus have an important impact on the vote.

Topics that receive the most press coverage may be most accessible to voters when they make their choices (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Because easily accessible ideas that come to mind quickly have been demonstrated to strongly affect decisions (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), news items that receive the most coverage may form the considerations according to which candidates are judged. In other words, prominent campaign stories may prime voters to utilize certain criteria in evaluating the candidates.

Recent research demonstrates that mass media exposure predicts attitudinal effects of news reception, in particular attitude change in the direction of dominant news messages. For example, the stress the media place on certain topics can alter the centrality of a policy topic to the public's judgment of the president (Iyengar, Kinder, Peters & Krosnick, 1984). The news media play an important role by directing public attention to one policy area or another as a consideration for evaluating the president. The power of the media to determine what comes to mind most readily when asked to judge a politician is known as priming.

> Priming presumes that when evaluating complex political objects -- the performance of an incumbent president, or the promises of a presidential contender -- citizens do not take into account all that they know. They cannot, even if they were motivated to do so. What they do consider is what comes to mind, those bits and pieces of political memory that are accessible. And television news . . . is a most powerful force determining what springs to the citizen's mind and what does not. (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 4).

Iyengar and Kinder (1987) explain that priming is possible because human thinking powers are very modest when compared with the complexities of the environment in which human beings live. Therefore, people satisfice, finding "good enough" solutions to their problems and "good enough" courses of action (Simon, 1979). People do not pay attention to everything, noticing only particular features of special consequence. Research on judgment reveals that rather than undertaking exhaustive analysis, people ordinarily prefer to solve problems with what comes to mind (Fischhoff, Slovic & Lichtenstein, 1980).

Research on priming demonstrates that "by providing glimpses of some aspects of national life while neglecting others, television news helps define the standards that viewers apply to presidential performance" (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 72). In addition, "priming operates on the choices voters make. The priorities that are uppermost in voters' minds as they go to the polls to select a president appear to be powerfully shaped by the last-minute preoccupations of television news" (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 110). These effects are likely true for most newspaper readers as well, since perusing the front page of the typical newspaper provides the reader with essentially the same information as watching a newscast. Because individuals often rely upon information that is most accessible when called upon to make a decision (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), campaign coverage may set the terms voters use to evaluate the candidates and form choices.

The majority of Americans receive most, if not all, of their political information from the mass media. Newspapers and television probably transmit many of the considerations upon which citizens base their vote choices. In election years, the media establish which candidates and issues are important. This agenda-setting function begins early in the campaign and dictates who and what the voting public should consider important (Chaffee, 1975). The media determine to a large extent what the crucial issues will be, that is those on which the competence of candidates will be judged (Graber, 1980). Numerous studies have found that campaign news is not about specific facts and figures (see O'Keefe & Atwood, 1981), but that the information the media provide most is geared toward decision-making based on judging candidates' general ability and integrity.

Different types of voters have diverse ways of using campaign and pre-campaign information in arriving at their judgments of the candidates. Chaffee and Choe (1980) report that in 1976, more than two-thirds of voters made up their minds after the start of the fall campaign. Research indicates that pre-campaign decisions are made predominantly by voters who are well educated, partisan, actively discussing the campaign even before the period of heaviest information flow from the media, and who already see large differences between the candidates (Chaffee & Choe, 1980). In the absence of this precommitment though, Chaffee and Choe (1980) demonstrate that "those exposed to the campaign make their vote decisions primarily on the basis of campaign-specific information" (p. 67). These results suggest that for voters who are not strongly precommitted partisans, the themes stressed by the campaigns and emphasized in the news may form the criteria that citizens use to evaluate the candidates.

Evaluations of candidates have been demonstrated to be important determinants of voting decisions (Brody & Page, 1973; Kelley & Mirer, 1974). Brody & Page (1973) found that individuals vote for the candidate they favor, however slightly, over other candidates, with the provision that party identification breaks ties. This decision rule accounted for the behavior of 90 percent of the voters in 1968 (Brody & Page, 1973). Similarly, Kelley & Mirer (1974) correctly predicted, on the average, 88 percent of the vote in the two-candidate presidential elections of 1952, 1956, 1960, and 1964 with the decision rule and 81 percent of the three-candidate race of 1968. Kelley & Mirer (1974) suggest that for considerations to be included in the determination of which candidate the individual favors more, likes and dislikes must attain a certain threshold of importance. The criteria that individuals are most likely to use are those that are most accessible, perhaps the campaign themes which have been primed by the mass media.

The idea that the mass media have the ability to transfer the salience of items on their news agendas to the public agenda agenda has been empirically tested using survey methods (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Correlational evidence of the agenda-setting role of the press prompted experimental investigations (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). These experiments demonstrate that by emphasizing some stories and ignoring others, the media shape the public's political priorities (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Agenda-setting experiments led to examination of how the media influence the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates are judged. Iyengar & Kinder (1987) conducted a series of experiments indicating that television news affects the terms by which Americans evaluate political objects, and that this priming effect operates on the choices voters make. We return to field survey methods to further investigate how priming works in the context of a real campaign.

Previous examinations of priming have demonstrated effects for specific issues stressed in television news such as the economy, taxes, or defense (cf. Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Other research indicates that for certain voters, exposure to a political campaign leads to the formation of vote choices based on campaign-specific information (Chaffee & Choe, 1980). These findings lead us to propose an expanded meaning of priming. Priming may apply not only to particular issues, but may also refer to the whole set of themes that are emphasized during a political campaign. Campaign-specific issues and images that the media stress may be more salient than other pre-existing attributes of the candidates for citizens who form vote choices during the fall campaign. Specifically, it is likely that certain types of voters will make their decisions on the basis of campaign-specific information.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The theory of priming suggests that media coverage during a presidential election campaign enhances attention cumulatively for certain topics. A central goal of a presidential candidate is to get himself and his platform in the news as often and as favorably as possible. Therefore, contemporary American presidential campaigns are tailored to the needs of the news media, especially television. These efforts, coupled with the fact that campaign news is generally about the activities of the campaign rather than about issues (O'Keefe & Atwood, 1981), mean that voters may receive a rather limited array of campaign information from the popular media. The repetition of these few themes over the course of many weeks may render them progressively more salient in the minds of citizens. This reasoning suggests that an important media effect during presidential campaigns is determining the standards citizens use to form vote decisions.

The preceding review of relevant literature suggests the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: As election day approaches, campaign-related themes will become increasingly salient.

Campaign themes should be more important as the campaign unfolds, because of repetition. In addition, because election campaigns are constrained to a known stopping point (election day), campaigns become more pervasive in the media closer to election day. There is more to report as candidates feverishly try to garner as much support as possible. Moreover, political advertisements become virtually unavoidable on television, as they become concentrated in the final few weeks of the campaign.

> Hypothesis 2: Campaign-related themes will be more salient for those who are more attentive to campaign news.

Priming is caused by the disproportionate prominence of certain news items. Those who read stories and watch newscasts about the campaign will be exposed to more campaign-related information. Amount of attention paid to news has been shown to correlated positively with campaign information (Chaffee & Choe, 1980; McLeod, Glynn & McDonald, 1983).

> Hypothesis 3: Campaign-related themes will be most salient for voters who make up their minds during the campaign.

The impact the fall campaign can have on voters is mediated by when citizens decide for whom to vote. Strongly precommitted partisans, who know for whom they will vote before the campaign begins, doubtless have firm attitudes upon which to base their choices that are exogenous to the campaign. Weakly committed or undecided voters' decisions can be significantly affected by media content (Chaffee & Choe, 1980). Because these individuals seek standards to use in forming a vote choice, they should be especially susceptible to priming. In fact, research indicates that campaign deciders typically make their vote decisions on the basis of campaign-specific information (Chaffee & Choe, 1980), whereas both the predecided and the inattentive "last-minute deciders" do not.

> Hypothesis 4: As the campaign progresses, campaign-related themes will become more important predictors of candidate evaluation.

If, as we hypothesize, campaign-related themes become more salient as the pace of campaigning intensifies closer to election day, then these attitudes will become increasingly accessible and thus more likely to form the criteria used to judge the candidates. In addition, campaign deciders will be forming their decisions over the course of the campaign, and these individuals will presumably be using campaign-specific information as the bases for their judgments. Furthermore, the reinforcement effects that are traditionally considered the most common effect of political campaigns (Berelson & Steiner, 1964) should also imply an increasing importance of campaign-related themes; that is, pre-decided voters may use campaign themes to bolster their preexisting attitudes. Therefore, campaign themes should increasingly become the terms voters use to form or reinforce their candidate evaluations.

Methods

In order to determine the relationship between campaign themes and candidate evaluation, data from the fall 1988 Pre- and Post-Election Survey of the American National Election Study was analyzed. A rolling cross-section of 2040 U.S. citizens of voting age was interviewed during the nine weeks prior to the election. The total sample was composed of four random sub-samples. The four random replicates of the sample were released at separate points in time. Since more reluctant and hard-to-reach respondents may be systematically interviewed later than more amenable respondents if the entire sample is released at once, this procedure guards against contamination of the data by difficulty of obtaining the interview. This procedure also gives us an opportunity to study the effects of differential exposure to the campaign.

The first quarter sample was interviewed September 6 -September 19, the second September 20-October 3, the third October 4-October 17, and the final quarter was interviewed October 18-October 31. November 1-November 7 was left for "catch-up" interviews. Eighty percent of all interviews were taken within the target period. The pre-election response rate was 71 percent. In the post-election survey, 1775 respondents were re-interviewed. The post-election response rate was 87 percent.

Endogenous variables

Candidate evaluation. Respondents were asked to give their evaluations of each presidential candidate on a scale ranging from 0 (very unfavorable), through 50 (neutral), to 100 (very favorable). These evaluations were intended to elicit a summary judgment of the candidates based on all relevant factors, including party, issues, and personal characteristics. Evaluations of Dukakis were subtracted from those for Bush. The resulting score ranged from -100 (very favorable for Dukakis) to 100 (very favorable for Bush). Sixteen percent of the respondents received a score of 0 indicating they gave both candidates the same rating.

Campaign-related comments. Answers to a series of open-ended questions asked in the pre-election survey concerning respondents' likes and dislikes about the major candidates in the 1988 election were analyzed to examine the information individuals held about the candidates. These items measure contemporaneous judgments of the candidates. Respondents were told: "Now I'd like to ask you about the good and bad points of the two major candidates for President. Is there anything in particular about Mr. Bush that might make you want to vote for him? (What is it? . . . Anything else? . . .) Is there anything in particular about Mr. Bush that might make you want to vote against him? (What is it? . . . Anything else?)." Up to five positive and five negative responses were recorded. Identical questions about Dukakis followed those concerning Bush. Responses to these recall items are doubtless partially a function of recent (and therefore easily remembered) exposure to political information. In addition, these responses likely reflect some cognitive structure, some readiness to process, store, and have available for recall certain types of political information (Lau, 1986). Positive and negative comments must be salient and accessible in order to be volunteered. Therefore, these responses should represent the criteria or terms used to evaluate the candidates (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

The various responses to the open-ended questions were categorized into campaign-related comments and non-campaign-related comments. Determination of what themes were stressed in the 1988 presidential campaign was based on Germond and Witcover's (1989) account of the race. (See Appendix for exact coding.) A proportion of campaign-related comments to total number of possible comments (5) was calculated separately for each candidates' positive and negative responses. Thus, four proportions were computed. This scoring procedure controls for the total number of responses offered about each candidate, eliminating simple verbosity and its correlates (e.g., education) from the measure. Consequently, every respondent received a score ranging from 0 to 1 for positive and for negative comments about each candidate.

Exogenous variables

Partisanship. Despite the weakening of party ties, partisanship doubtless continues to be an important predictor of peoples' candidate evaluations. In these analyses, a seven-point partisanship scale ranging from 0 (strong Democrat) to 6 (strong Republican) was used. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents were classified as Republicans, 36 percent as Democrats, and 36 percent as Independents.

Attention to campaign news. When considering cognitive phenomena, attention to media is considered a key step in the communication process (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986). Measurement of attention to a medium (especially television) instead of simple exposure more adequately reflects an individual's use of that medium because while reading involves both exposure and attention, the same is not true for television. Respondents were asked, "How much attention did you pay to newspaper articles about the campaign for president?" and "How much attention did you pay to news on TV about the campaign for president?" Responses were coded as "a great deal," "quite a bit," "some," "very little," or "none." These two items were combined in an additive attention to campaign news index (Cronbach's alpha = .71).

Type of voter. In order to specify what types of voter's candidate evaluations were most influenced by campaign themes, respondents were classified according to whether they voted and when they formed a vote decision. Thirty-one percent did not vote for a presidential candidate. Voters were asked in the post-election interview, "How long before the election did you decide that you were going to vote the way you did?" Respondents who reported they "knew all along," or decided before and during the conventions were categorized as pre-decided voters. Those who reported they decided "during the campaign," "after the conventions," during or after the debates, "in the last few days of the campaign," or "on election day" were categorized as campaign-deciders. Forty-two percent reported they decided before the campaign, and 27 percent decided during the campaign.

Time periods

Campaign news and advertising becomes more prevalent as election day approaches. Although most of the campaign themes in the 1988 presidential election were present at the beginning of the general election, a few topics were introduced later. Germond and Witcover's (1989) report of the campaign reveals that Bush adhered to a campaign message that stressed liberalism, law and order (i.e., prison-furloughs) and patriotism, specifically the pledge of allegiance and the flag. Dukakis' campaign seemed primarily on the defensive through most of September and October. Near the close of the campaign, however, Dukakis introduced a populist message. It is possible that different campaign themes became salient at various points during the campaign.

The relationship between attention to media content and candidate evaluations is expected to be specified by time. Respondents interviewed later in the campaign are expected to make more use of campaign-specific information in their assessments of the candidates. To test this hypothesis, we took advantage of the four random replicates that comprised the sample. Twenty percent of respondents, however, were not interviewed during their target period. Therefore, the actual date a survey was completed was used to categorize interviews into four time periods. These first three periods match the quarters defined above exactly: September 6-September 19, September 20-October 3, October 4-October 17. The last period, however, was extended to election day: October 17-November 7. Discriminant function analyses were conducted to determine whether these four groups were different according to party identification, age, race, education, income, and involvement in politics; they were not. These four groups are considered to be four random and independent samples of the full sample. Thus, they become grouping variables in a quasi-experimental design because they are random samples that are replicates of one another.

Results

Predictive validity of candidate evaluation

Since the studies of Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1948), it has been traditional to ask about the effect media have on the vote. We hypothesize that campaign-related comments affect candidate evaluations. According to classic political communication research, this is primarily interesting if candidate evaluations predict the vote. Thus the explanatory value of our model rests on how accurately it helps us predict voters' choices. We cross-tabulated the vote by candidate evaluation. In the post-election interview, respondents were asked to report how they voted. Fifty-three percent voted for Bush and 47 percent voted for Dukakis. Our results agree with previous research (Brody & Page, 1973; Kelley & Mirer, 1974) in finding that candidate evaluation is very successful in predicting the vote ($X^2=897.88$, $p<.001$). Among those who voted, 95 percent of those who evaluated Dukakis more favorably than Bush voted for Dukakis, and 94 percent of those who evaluated Bush more favorably voted for him. We also find (cf. Brody & Page, 1973) that those who gave both candidates that same rating were less likely to vote than were those who saw a clear preference: 55 percent of this group did not vote, 27 percent of this group voted for Dukakis, and 17 percent voted for Bush. The predictive utility of candidate evaluation, we conclude, is very high.

Salience of campaign-related comments

We propose that the campaign themes that are stressed in the media will form voters standards for evaluating the candidates. The mean proportions for the four types of campaign-related comments are plotted in Figure 1. Clearly, campaign themes are not the only topics people consider when asked to give reasons why they would or would not vote for the candidates. The campaign does, however, appear to be differentially making salient certain topics. Anti-Dukakis campaign-related comments appear to have been the most successfully emphasized campaign themes.

Insert Figure 1 About Here

We computed a series of analyses of variance to determine whether time, attention to campaign news, and type of voter were related to campaign-related comments. The first column of Table 1 reveals that time was significantly related to pro-Dukakis campaign-related comments ($F(3,1568)=5.15$, $p \leq .01$) and to anti-Dukakis campaign-related comments ($F(3,1568)=5.22$, $p \leq .001$), but not to campaign-related comments about Bush. Our first hypothesis that campaign-related themes would become more salient over the course of the campaign is only partially supported. It appears that the unfolding of the campaign increased the salience of campaign-related information about Dukakis, but not about Bush.

Insert Table 1 About Here

The second column of Table 1 indicates that attention to campaign news is related to pro-Bush campaign-related comments ($F(2,1568)=6.24$, $p \leq .01$), to anti-Bush comments ($F(2,1568)=7.45$, $p \leq .001$), and to anti-Dukakis comments ($F(2,1568)=7.34$, $p \leq .001$). Pro-Dukakis comments were apparently not affected by amount of attention one paid to the campaign in the media. The third column of Table 1 reveals that type of voter is significantly related to campaign-related comments pro-Bush ($F(2,1568)=9.17$, $p<.001$), anti-Bush ($F(2,1568)=4.40$, $p<.01$), and anti-Dukakis ($F(2,1568)=6.62$, $p<.001$). Pre-decided voters, campaign deciders, and non-voters did not differ in their likelihood of mentioning campaign-related comments in favor of Dukakis.

To further examine these relationships, we correlated attention to campaign news and type of voter with campaign-related comments. Our second hypothesis stated that campaign themes would be more salient for those who were more attentive to campaign news in newspapers and on television. The first row of Table 2 indicates that attention to campaign news is positively related to proportion of pro-Bush campaign related comments ($r = .09$, $p \leq .001$), anti-Bush campaign-related comments ($r =.10$, $p \leq .001$), pro-Dukakis campaign-related comments ($r =.08$, $p \leq .001$), and anti-Dukakis campaign-related comments ($r = .10$, $p \leq .001$). These results support our second hypothesis. Increased attention to campaign news led to the increased salience of campaign themes concerning both Bush and Dukakis.

Insert Table 2 About Here

Our third hypothesis stated that type of voter should be related to prevalence of campaign-related themes because campaign deciders should have the most motivation to use campaign themes as standards to form vote decisions. Examination of the second row of Table 2 indicates that nonvoters are consistently different from voters (campaign deciders and pre-decided voters). Nonvoters were considerably less likely to mention campaign themes pro-Bush ($r = -.10$, $p \leq .001$), anti-Bush ($r = -.07$, $p \leq .001$), pro-Dukakis ($r = -.06$, $p \leq .001$), and anti-Dukakis ($r = -.10$, $p \leq .001$). Row three demonstrates that campaign themes were more salient for campaign deciders than for pre-decided voters. Campaign deciders were more likely to mention campaign themes pro-Bush ($r = .11$, $p \leq .001$), anti-Bush ($r = .09$, $p \leq .001$), pro-Dukakis ($r = .05$, $p \leq .05$), and anti-Dukakis ($r = .07$, $p \leq .001$). Proportions of campaign-related comments were highest for campaign deciders, followed by pre-decided voters and then non-voters. Thus, our third hypothesis that campaign-specific information would be most salient for voter who make up their minds during the campaign is supported.

Priming effects

The results for our first three hypotheses confirm that the measures of campaign themes have discriminant validity. That is, the measures discriminate groups of respondents in logical ways. In general, campaign-deciders and those who paid attention to campaign news were more likely to consider campaign-specific information important. Moreover, campaign-related themes about Dukakis became more salient over the course of the campaign. We now turn to an investigation of whether respondents evaluate candidates on the basis of these campaign themes.

In order to determine the effect of increased salience of campaign themes on candidate evaluation, a hierarchical regression analysis was estimated. The correlations between the independent variables are presented in Table 3. These correlations are collapsed across time because the measurement error should be the same in each sample. With the exception of one instance, there do not appear to be any problems with multi-collinearity ($|.04| \leq r \leq |.19|$). The relatively strong correlation that exists, quite logically, between pro-Bush campaign-related comments and anti-Dukakis campaign-related comments ($r = .45$, $p \leq .001$) did not yield unreliable coefficients in subsequent analyses.

Insert Table 3 About Here

Table 4 displays the results of the hierarchical regression analysis of the relationship of candidate evaluation by partisanship and campaign-related comments. We computed separate equations for each of the four time groups. This enables us to examine the importance of campaign themes at various time periods during the campaign.

Insert Table 4 About Here

The model consistently predicts about half the variance in candidate evaluation ($.47 \leq R^2 \leq .51$). Table 4 indicates that partisanship is strongly, positively related to candidate evaluation during each time period. Interestingly, partisanship declines in importance as a predictor of candidate evaluation over the course of the campaign. During the first several weeks of September, partisanship explained 49 percent of the variance in candidate evaluation ($R^2 = .49$, $p \leq .001$), and during the latter part of September and the beginning of October partisanship explained 48 percent ($R^2 = .48$, $p \leq .001$). During October partisanship decreased in importance: in the middle of October partisanship accounted for 43 percent of the variance in candidate evaluation ($R^2 = .43$, $p \leq .001$) and at the end of the campaign, it accounted for 40 percent ($R^2 = .40$, $p \leq .001$). This pattern suggests that pre-campaign attributes became less influential in determining individuals' candidate assessments over the course of the election campaign.

Campaign-related comments, on the other hand, contributed increasingly importantly to the prediction of candidate evaluation. Our fourth hypothesis, that campaign-themes would become increasingly salient as the campaign progressed, is supported. Table 4 indicates that the four proportions of campaign-related comments account for three times as much of the variance in candidate evaluation at the end of the campaign than at the beginning. The trend is not monotonic. During the first several weeks of September, campaign-related comments explained 2 percent of the variance in candidate evaluation ($R^2 = .02$, $p \leq .001$), during the latter part of September and the beginning of October they explained 4 percent ($R^2 = .04$, $p \leq .001$), and in the middle of October they explained 8 percent of the variance in candidate evaluation ($R^2 = .08$, $p \leq .001$). At the end of the campaign, however, campaign-related comments decreased slightly in importance, accounting for 6 percent ($R^2 = .06$, $p \leq .001$). Despite this slight down-turn at the end of the campaign, these results indicate that campaign themes became more important predictors of candidate evaluation as the campaign progressed.

The regression coefficients for the four proportions of campaign-related comments were in the predicted directions. Attitudes about Dukakis more clearly fit the predicted pattern, and anti-Dukakis attitudes were the most consistent. Attitudes against Bush were most significant at the close of the campaign. Campaign-related comments in favor of Bush did not follow the pattern of effects we had hypothesized since they were most important in predicting candidate evaluation in mid-October. The results, however, confirm that campaign themes became more strongly related to candidate evaluation as the campaign unfolded. Therefore, we see that campaign-specific information was primed: campaign themes did become the terms by which candidate evaluations were made.

Discussion

Our results demonstrate that the 1988 presidential election campaign did differentially prime certain campaign themes. As the campaign unfolded, campaign themes became increasingly important predictors of candidate evaluations, which are closely related to the vote. Apparently the standards voters used to judge the candidates were substantially determined by which stories the press chose to cover and, consequently, which considerations were made generally accessible. In addition, campaign deciders and those who paid more attention to campaign news were more likely to consider campaign themes important when judging the candidates.

Our results demonstrate that campaign-specific information is not the most important predictor of candidate evaluation. In fact, during the 1988 campaign, campaign themes did not appear to be very powerful. Campaign themes did appear, however, to heighten voters' perceptions of candidates. Moreover, campaign-specific information was more reflected in the candidate assessments of individuals who were more exposed to the campaign. The fact that campaign-related comments became increasingly important determinants of candidate evaluations as the campaign progressed, for those who were more attentive to campaign news, and for campaign deciders reveals that for those individuals who are most available to it, the campaign can exert an influence.

Our results corroborate Iyengar and Kinder's (1987) conclusion that "priming operates on the choices voters make" (p. 110). Our examination expands upon their research in two ways. The use of cross-sectional survey data during a real campaign enhances the external validity of our demonstration of priming effects. In addition, we expand Iyengar & Kinder's (1987) conception of priming from particular issues to a whole set of related themes. It appears that a political campaign can define the criteria underlying many citizens' vote choices. The media during a presidential campaign, therefore, seem to be able to prime campaign-specific information.

Priming effects were strongest and most consistent for anti-Dukakis campaign-related comments. This finding confirms journalistic interpretations that Bush won the election by stressing Dukakis' shortcomings, not by enhancing his own strengths (Germond & Witcover, 1989). Moreover, Bush's ads attacking Dukakis were frequently the subject of news items. Thus, Americans were exposed to messages such as the Willie Horton ads repeatedly, both in the actual commercial and in stories about the commercial.

Our results indicate that the unfolding of the campaign significantly increased the salience of campaign-specific information about Dukakis, but not as strongly information about Bush. This may be due to the fact that Bush was much better known at the start of the campaign since he had served as President Reagan's vice president for eight years. Therefore, for most voters, there was more to learn about Dukakis because he was relatively new to the national political scene in September of 1988.

Increased attention to campaign news led to the increased salience of campaign-specific information about Bush. In addition, anti-Dukakis campaign-related comments were enhanced by paying more attention to campaign news. Attention to campaign news did not affect pro-Dukakis attitudes. This may be because there simply was not much pro-Dukakis information in the news during the 1988 presidential campaign. According to Germond & Witcover (1989) most of the news was about the Bush campaign and the shortcomings of the Dukakis campaign.

As has been demonstrated in previous research (Chaffee & Choe, 1980), campaign-deciders were most likely to use campaign-specific information as the basis of candidate evaluations. Pre-decided voters, however, were also quite likely to consider campaign themes salient. This may be because the campaign provided content that reinforced their pre-existing commitments. These results point to important effects for the 1988 presidential campaign. Not only did campaign themes become important criteria for voters to make vote decisions, they also seemed to bolster pre-committed voters' choices.

Classic research on political communication typically found little persuasive effect for election campaigns (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1948). The primary effect of campaigns was determined to be the reinforcement of preexisting attitudes (Berelson & Steiner, 1964). Attitude change, according to this tradition, occurs primarily when individuals have weak attitudes (Klapper, 1960) and modest amounts of information (Converse, 1962). The conclusion from this research was that election campaigns have quite limited effects on voters. In the past two decades, however, this view has been challenged. There is now widespread recognition that the mass media do indeed have an important influence on voters (Atkin, 1981). Therefore, the question is no longer whether effects occur, but to specify the nature and degree of impact.

In this study, we demonstrate that in the 1988 presidential campaign, the media determined the standards citizens used to form vote choices. It is possible that campaign themes became especially salient during the 1988 presidential election because there was a dearth of substantive issues to consider. According to Germond & Witcover (1989), Bush was able to divert press and public attention from the issues by "going negative" against Dukakis. This forced Dukakis on the defensive, spending most of his time responding to Bush's attacks. The centerpiece issue of the campaign was patriotism. In an election involving a more divisive issue such as the Iran hostage situation in 1980, campaign-specific information may not play such an important role. If large groups of voters are polarized on an issue, it is unlikely that campaign rhetoric can do much to influence them. Comparison of our findings with other elections would clarify the priming process during presidential campaigns.

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Appendix

Party/candidate master codes for the 1988 American National Election study were examined. The following responses were coded as campaign-related comments:

NES code	Content area
0335	Makes people feel good about America/ being Americans; is patriotic/loves the country
0411	Patriotic; likes Bush's stand on Pledge of Allegiance issue
0412	Unpatriotic; dislikes Dukakis' stand on Pledge of Allegiance issue
0426	Wealthy; rich; born with silver spoon in his mouth
0435	Kind/warm/gentle
0436	Cold/aloof
0438	Not likeable/ can't get along with people
0601	Good/ efficient/ businesslike administration; balance budget; lower/ wouldn't increase national debt; cautious spending
0603	Honest government; not corrupt; no "mess in Washington"
0604	Dishonest/ corrupt government; "mess in Washington"; immorality in government
0804	(Too) negative; always tearing down other side; no solutions of his own
0815	(Too) liberal
0968-0978	Law and order
0980	public morality -- strict/older/traditionalistic outlook; improve/renew morality of country; pro-family; defends family values
0981	Public morality -- permissive/news/modernistic outlook; not (strongly enough) pro-family; doesn't defend (strongly enough) family values
0982-0984	Drugs
0985-0987	Abortion
0988-0990	Gun control
1041-1042	Death penalty
1198	(Involvement in) Diversion of money to the Contras (in violation of the law)
1203-1204	"People like me"

Table 1

Summary of analyses of variance of campaign-related comments by time, attention to campaign news, and type of voter (*N*=1604)

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables		
	Time	Attention to campaign news	Type of voter
Campaign-related comments	$F(3,1568)$	$F(2,1568)$	$F(2,1568)$
Pro-Bush	2.07	6.24***	9.17***
Anti-Bush	2.42	7.45***	4.40**
Pro-Dukakis	5.15**	2.72	2.63
Anti-Dukakis	5.22***	7.34***	6.62***

*$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$. ***$p \leq .001$.

Note. There were no significant interactions between the independent variables.

Table 2

Correlations of campaign-related comments, type of voter, and attention to campaign news (1834 ≤ N ≤ 2040)

	Pro-Bush	Anti Bush	Pro-Dukakis	Anti-Dukakis
Attention to campaign news	.09***	.10***	.08***	.10***
Nonvoters (dummy)	-.10***	-.07***	-.06**	-.10***
Camp. deciders (dummy)	.11***	.09***	.05*	.07***

*$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$. ***$p \leq .001$.

Note: Respondents were categorized into 3 groups: nonvoters (31%), campaign deciders (27%), and pre-decided voters (42%). The significance levels tested here test deviation of correlations from zero. For specific differences between the three groups see text.

Table 3

Correlations of campaign-related comments and partisanship (N = 2040)

	Pro-Bush	Anti Bush	Pro-Dukakis	Anti-Dukakis
Anti-Bush	-.02			
Pro-Dukakis	-.04*	.13***		
Anti-Dukakis	.45***	.01	-.03	
Partisanship	.16***	-.06**	-.15***	.19***

*$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$. ***$p \leq .001$.

Table 4

Candidate evaluation[1] by campaign-related comments and partisanship, at four time periods (hierarchical regression[2])

	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3		Time 4	
	9/6-9/19 (N = 437)		9/20-10/3 (N = 481)		10/4-10/17 (N = 521)		10/18-11/7 (N = 601)	
Predictor Variables	std. beta	R^2 chng.	std. beta	R^2 chng.	std. beta	R^2 chng.	std. beta	R^2 chng.
Block 1:								
Partisanship	.66***		.63***		.59***		.58***	
		.49***		.48***		.43***		.40***
Block 2:								
Pro-Bush campaign comments	.09*		.01		.17***		.03	
Anti-Dukakis campaign comments	.07		.16***		.14***		.15***	
Pro-Dukakis campaign comments	-.08*		-.07*		-.12***		-.14***	
Anti-Bush campaign comments	-.03		-.07*		-.03		-.12***	
		.02***		.04***		.08***		.06***
TOTAL R^2	.51***		.51***		.51***		.47***	

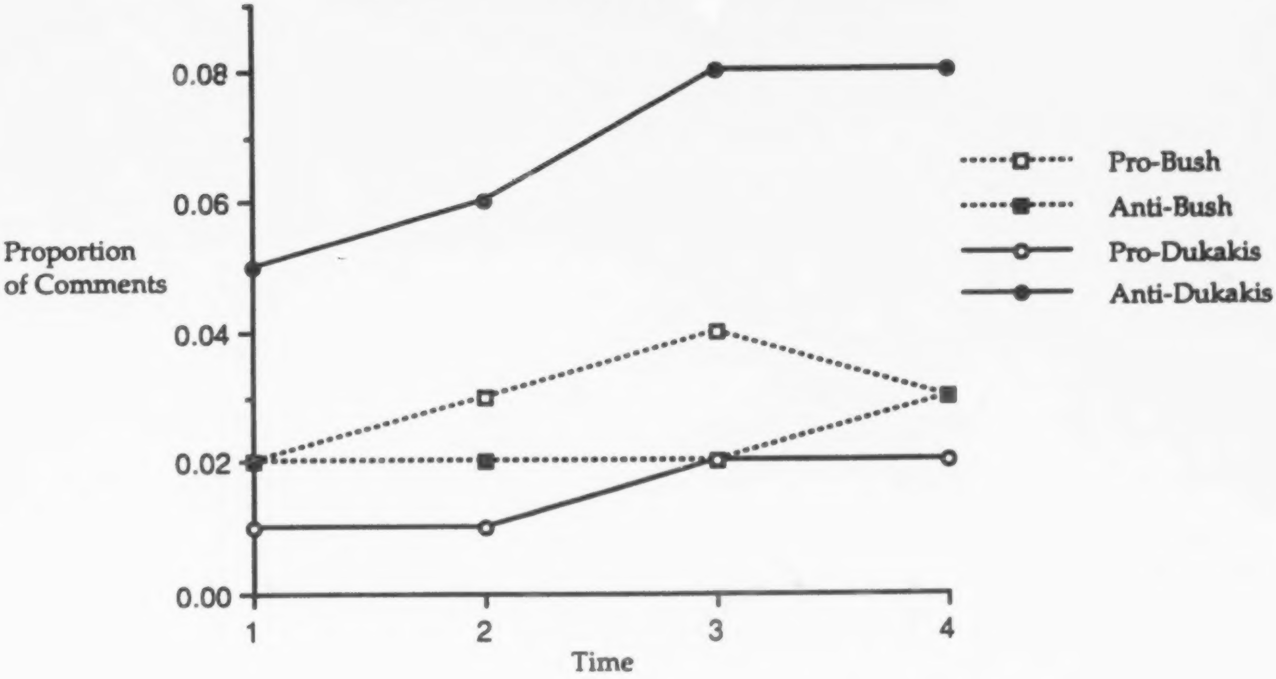
*$p \le .05$. **$p \le .01$. ***$p \le .001$.

Note 1: Candidate evaluation is scored such that (-100) represents very favorable toward Dukakis and (+100) represents very favorable toward Bush.

Note 2: The standardized betas from the final step with all variables included in the equation were used in the table above.

Figure 1

Proportion of Campaign-Related Comments



ROUTINE NEWSWORK AND THE WHAT-A-STORY:
A CASE STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

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ROUTINE NEWSWORK AND THE WHAT-A-STORY:
A CASE STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

The process of selecting and gathering news for local television has often been described as routine work (Bantz, McCorkle & Baade, 1980; Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1987; Tuchman, 1978). Newsworkers[1] establish these routines to increase efficiency and reduce uncertainty, and they seldom make significant departures from these regular courses of action. In a larger sense, these routines do not function independently of each other, but instead are part of a *system* for accomplishing everyday tasks in a way that can regularly meet organizational expectations for a daily newscast.

When an extremely unusual story surfaces, everyday routines do not offer much value for the accomplishment of newswork (Bennett, Gressett, & Haltom, 1985; Tuchman, 1978). To meet organizational expectations when covering these unusual situations, the news organization must suspend everyday routines and adopt a new process. Tuchman (1978) provides an example of newsworkers preparing a story about President Lyndon Johnson's televised speech on deescalation of bombing in the Vietnam war.

The news story was based almost completely on a prepared text, and newsworkers showed little interest in watching what they had come to expect. As the speech began, however, newsworkers discovered that Johnson had departed significantly from Johnson's prepared text with a bombshell announcement that he would not seek reelection to the presidency. Upon hearing this, the newsroom broke into a frenzy, the editors periodically pausing to exclaim, "What a story!" At that point, newsworkers needed to suspend their everyday news process and adopt a new routine to accomplish the spirit and intent of their everyday work.

This paper explores one television station's routine news selection process and its coverage of an air disaster story to illuminate how the everyday process changed for a what-a-story. This provides a rare opportunity, because observational research was conducted in the newsroom before, during, and after the story broke. The purposes of the research are: 1) to identify the everyday news process for producing a daily newscast; 2) to distinguish the pivot point that signified a what-a-story had occurred; and 3) to specify key characteristics of the new routine employed to cover the what-a-story.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Research about newswork has suggested that much of the character of news can be traced to journalists' routine activities (Eliasoph, 1988; Fishman, 1982; Gans, 1979; Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1987; Tuchman, 1973). News routines are defined here as regular procedures or strategies used for gathering or evaluating news.

Examples include: 1) applying a typified scheme of actors, settings, and story plots to news items under consideration (Berger, 1982; Bird & Dardenne, 1988; Gitlin, 1980; Smith, 1979; Tuchman, 1978); 2) relying on a regular pool of news sources for information (Altheide, 1976; Gans, 1979; Sigal, 1986; Soloski, 1989b); 3) looking for news in the form of events (Berkowitz, 1987; Brown, Bybee, Weardon, & Straughan, 1987; Fishman, 1980; Turk, 1986); and 4) gathering news through a beat reporting system (Fishman, 1980; Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978).

The work of creating local television newscasts is largely dictated by the necessities of everyday life within a profit-seeking venture (Bantz, McCorkle, & Baade, 1980; Gans, 1979; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1987). Management expects newsworkers to turn out a product with the resources that have been allotted, and within the time frames that have been prescribed (Altheide, 1976). Because resources and time are almost always in short supply (Epstein, 1973), news routines simplify and streamline newswork. News routines, then, are not a matter of mindless behavior, but rather a set of purposive, socially learned schemes employed to expedite tasks (Bantz, McCorkle, & Baade, 1980) and avoid conflict with the organization's power structure and policies (Bantz, 1985; Breed, 1955; Soloski, 1989a). Rarely are these routines formally prescribed by the news organization.

Individual news routines do not function independently, but within a loosely structured system that cannot quite be called decision-making (Berkowitz, 1990; Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1977).

Many gatekeeping studies have treated newswork as decision-making, however (i.e., Buckalew, 1970; White, 1950; Whitney & Becker, 1980). Some research has also considered the elements in the routine news process as variables, and then attempted to evaluate their individual and collective importance in the news selection process (Bantz, McCorkle, & Baade, 1980; Eliasoph, 1988; Gans, 1979).

Another train of research argues that activities such as newswork exist in a cultural context where people constantly encounter extraneous conditions and accomplish work in a way that cannot meaningfully be understood through an examination of discrete variables (Bantz, 1985; Tuchman, 1973; Zimmerman, 1970). For example, Tuchman's (1973) initial investigation of newswork began by considering news decisions in terms of story categories, but she found that few of the categories could be defined clearly. She then proceeded with an alternative research approach focusing on how journalistic culture shaped the work of the journalists she observed. In practice, it was rare that newsworkers were able to strictly apply elements of their routine process, but instead they made frequent small departures from the process in order to comply with its spirit. When a what-a-story occurred, the departures were necessarily larger, and were effected by typifying how the story "should go," so that it could then be processed in a routine way.

In a sense, producing a newscast most closely resembles any other scheduling activity. Newscasts represent the framework of that schedule and typically follow prescribed formats containing specific slots for certain types of stories (Altheide, 1976; Bantz, McCorkle, & Baade, 1980; Berkowitz, 1990). The job of assignment editors, producers, and news directors is to fill the schedule by selecting news stories and assigning reporters to gather the necessary materials. Common raw materials for assignments come from news sources (Berkowitz, 1989, August; Sigal, 1986), other news organizations[2] (Atwater, Fico, & Pizante, 1987; Berkowitz, 1990), and a range of daily occurrences (Altheide, 1976; Fishman, 1980; Tuchman, 1977). Each newscast is created through a selection framework representing a tension between journalistic norms (what people need to know), business norms (an eye for efficient resource use, meeting organizational deadlines, pacing the competition), and entertainment norms (holding an audience's attention in an entertainment-oriented medium) (Bantz, 1985; Bantz, McCorkle, & Baade, 1980; Breed, 1955).

Several studies have suggested that the best way to understand the framework of the everyday news process is to place it in opposition to atypical situations (Bennett, Gressett, & Haltom, 1985; Eliasoph, 1988; Tuchman, 1978). The following sections of this paper take that approach by contrasting everyday newswork and a what-a-story situation. Rather than highlighting specific variables or categories, the discussion will focus on news _inputs_ and the newscast creation _process_.

STUDY CONTEXT

Observation and interviews with newsworkers took place over a four-month period at a top-25 market network-affiliate television station in the Midwest. A research day typically began with the station's story conference, which lasted from 8:30 a.m. until about 9:30 a.m. Observation then continued at the news desk and occasional conversations with producers and editors helped clarify these observations. Observation moved to the studio for the five o'clock newscast. This 60-minute program emphasized news occurring within about a one-hour drive of the station. A 30-minute newscast followed emphasizing city news. Each observation session continued through the end of the second newscast. Tapes of newscasts from that time period were also assessed.

The what-a-story occurred during a morning story conference in the third week of the study. This story involved an Air Force jet that lost power at 32,000 feet and then aborted an emergency landing attempt at the city's airport. On a second landing attempt, the pilot lost control of the jet at low altitude and bailed out. Moments later the aircraft plunged into the second floor of a hotel, directly above the lobby. Although the pilot parachuted to safety and was uninjured, nine people were killed as a result of a fire that swept the hotel; a tenth died several days later. The occurrence later was named the state's Associated Press story of the year.

Observation of the everyday news process continued for three additional weeks after the what-a-story. After a total of six weeks of observation, interviews were conducted with 10 newsworkers: the news director, assistant news director, managing editor, assignment editor, and six producers of the station's newscasts. These interviews ranged from half an hour to slightly more than an hour. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed along with observation notes. Analysis continued over the next two months until tentative findings were formulated. These findings were summarized and brought back to the site for feedback from six of the original ten newsworkers.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE EVERYDAY NEWS PROCESS

The major responsibility of newsworkers such as editors and producers was the orderly review and selection of items to be scheduled into a newscast. Their activities appeared to be contingent on performance of a series of tasks that could basically be considered as steps in the process. These steps encompass most, but not all, of the work for creating a newscast.

The assignment editor and two evening producers accomplished the first step, which involved screening news releases and other mail. Selection required approximately 10 to 30 seconds per item and was guided by a mix of professional, business, and entertainment norms. Only about 25 percent of the items passed this first screening; they were placed in folders in a file cabinet according to the day each event would take place. The first step culminated on the afternoon before each newscast, when the assignment editor created a "news budget" from the file's contents. Each news budget listed planned events, follow-up stories, and possible feature stories.

The second step took place at the morning story conference and began by considering items on the news budget and in the morning newspaper. Most important here were journalistic considerations such as timeliness or significance, but only a few of the possibilities were selected by news values alone. As a result, the second step constituted only a relatively small portion of the morning's work. This task was managed by the producers, the managing editor, the assistant news director, and the news director. A few reporters, generally the most experienced, were also involved because these stories required the greatest journalistic expertise.

The third step, still part of the story conference, related more to business and entertainment norms than to journalistic norms. This was because the majority of discussion centered around news items not journalistically necessary, but still useful for completing a newscast or holding audience interest. Some of these stories involved planned events, while others involved less timely topics and could be considered for feature stories. The remainder of the station's reporters arrived at this stage of the process to receive work assignments. News anchors typically arrived here too: their on-air role was closer to entertainers than journalists, and these feature stories and planned event news items were most appropriate for their organizational roles.

Timing became a key element in scheduling newscasts and assigning work to reporters, because reporters needed to complete their gathering of story materials and begin production by early afternoon. As a result, the scheduling in both steps two and three began by reviewing the news budgets' chronological list of stories, and choosing from among them stories most closely fitting the news production cycle that ran from mid-morning through mid-afternoon.

Once the story conference finished, producers began scheduling stories into initial lineups for the five o'clock and six o'clock newscasts. This was the fourth step. Most initial lineups contained a few non-essential stories that served as "place-holders" in the schedule and could be replaced if more interesting or more important stories surfaced later in the day. Initial lineups often fell short of a filled schedule, but producers kept an eye toward completing the schedules as soon as possible. In that way, the work process was orderly and efforts could later be directed toward polishing completed stories and writing incidental copy. The assignment editor occasonally expressed his concern about this practice from a journalistic perspective. If a newscast was "locked in" too early, he explained, producers were reluctant to incorporate breaking stories later in the day.

Some breaking stories were included, however, and this became the fifth step of the process. Breaking stories posed either opportunities or dilemmas. If one or more stories were needed to fill out the newscast, a breaking story offered the opportunity of an additional alternative. If a newscast lineup was already full, however, producers faced one dilemma because selecting a breaking story would require bumping a story already in production and wasting resources the organization had already committed. Producers faced a second dilemma if they chose to ignore a breaking story, because it might conflict with the journalistic norm of timeliness and the business norm of pacing the competition. In general, these breaking stories needed to possess higher journalistic or entertainment qualities than stories already on the lineup. To otherwise select one of these stories would only interrupt work flow, reduce work efficiency, and waste resources that had been already committed.

The sixth (and final) step in the everyday news process entailed smoothing out the schedule and producing the newscast. Even at this stage, however, the newscast schedule might be altered if a story was not ready on time, or if the sports or weather segments lasted longer than expected.

For the most part, this procedure for scheduling a newscast was applied in a straight-forward manner as an everyday work routine. Execution of the six steps had the appearance of a busy but orderly effort, and stories considered at each stage were incorporated with relative ease. Overall, this was a routine system that newsworkers could complete with a moderate to high level of expected predictability. Further, this accomplishment was achieved in a way that people familiar with newswork and newscasts would see as an acceptable outcome in light of the expected circumstances of the work.

An important expectation of newsworkers throughout the process was that most stories would approximate their typifications of news stories, so that they could be processed predictably and therefore accommodate journalistic and business norms. For example, a common newsroom practice was to refer to a story as "one of those," as in "We haven't done one of those stories lately." Yet, newsworkers knew that some items would require a small departure from the everyday routine, and that an occasional story would fall fully beyond the domain of the routine, presenting greater demands for their compliance with organizational norms and policies.

In actual practice, the steps outlined in this overview present a somewhat simplified version of how reporters and producers achieved the needs of organizational policy and journalistic norms to create a daily newscast. Everyday processing of stories into a newscast was not so clearly an assembly line effort, but instead appeared more as an interactive response to each story's unique characteristics in relation to other stories under discussion. By simplifying and outlining the basic routine, however, this overview serves as a basis for understanding how newsworkers developed their what-a-story routine.

FINDING THE WHAT-A-STORY PIVOT POINT

Adherence to the everyday work process sometimes led newsworkers to miss some important stories, and that was the case for the what-a-story. One element that contributed to missed stories was typification. Newsworkers employed typification to quickly assess the resource commitment and potential problems of a news item. If a certain "type" of story was perceived to consume resources without a certain payoff, or if that type frequently posed processing problems, it would likely be bypassed as a feasible alternative.

An important point here is that if some important stories were missed, it was not because of newsworkers' laziness, even though a casual observer might interpret it that way. Instead, missing an important story simply was an indicator of newsworkers' adherence to the efficient everyday work routine, and the norms that had created it.

One kind of typified story that might be bypassed was a fire story. Newsworkers employed two typified versions of fire stories; either version could successfully produce an airable story. If a news item did not seem a likely match to one of these two versions, it likely would not be covered. The first type of fire story was the "flames, smoke, and heroic firemen" story. This became clear during one day's live coverage of a noon fire. As newsworkers watched the story from newsroom monitors, they saw that smoke, but not fire, was involved. "Where's the smoke?" they asked each other, laughing because the story did not match their typification of the "good video" fire story. In their minds, the story was a wasted effort.

The second typified fire story was the "sifting through the rubble to solve the mystery" story. This version contained the drama of discovering how the fire had occurred, the emotional impact of people whose worlds had been destroyed, and the social message that a person's world could be rebuilt from chaos. During newsroom observation, this version was produced several times, including a large shopping center fire and a manufacturing business fire. This second typified version seemed to be preferred over the first because of the emotional impact of its content.

The day of this study's what-a-story began like most other news days, with a large proportion of news budget items fitting into the third step, when non-essential stories were selected. The earliest indication of a possible what-a-story came from one of the newsroom scanner radios. This was the time, however, when routine processing was most intense, and building an attainable news schedule was most precarious. Breaking stories only disrupted the scheduling process. So, when the newsworker watching the assignment desk interrupted the story conference to report "a big fire someplace," those in the conference showed little concern or interest. They knew that two basic types of fire stories provided an adequate payoff for the resource commitment, and so far, they did not see either typification in this vaguely defined fire. It would only disrupt orderly scheduling of the newscast and perhaps cause problems later by wasting resources at a time when they were sorely needed. Exemplifying their perceptions of the story was one reporter's offer to cover the fire "if it's not way the hell out of town."

If a major story was missed, however, newsworkers would not be able to defend this violation of journalistic and organizational norms to their superiors. Therefore, the assistant news director left the conference to find out more about it. He returned shortly. "Yup, there's a big fire someplace," he told the others, content that it was only a routine fire that did not justify breaking from the day's routine. The process continued, as newsworkers sifted through news budget items to fill the schedule.

The newsworker at the assignment desk continued to track the story, however. Finally, he heard the key words "plane crash" _and_ "hotel fire" on the scanner radio, signifying that this routine fire matched the what-a-story requirements of journalistic norms. If the plane had not hit a hotel, but instead crashed into a cornfield, this would not have been a what-a-story, because small plane accidents were not especially uncommon occurrences. A hotel fire on its own _might_ have been considered a what-a-story, but that would have depended on the particular hotel, the damage that was caused, and the number of potential casualties.

In this case, the what-a-story was signified by the _combination_ of elements involved. Here, a single-seat Air Force A-7D Corsair jet had bounced off the roof of a single-story bank building and crashed into an airport-area hotel after a high-altitude engine failure and an aborted airport landing attempt. One hundred-and-eight people had been registered in the hotel, plus others were eating in its restaurant or attending meetings there. Initial reports brought imagery of a building engulfed in flames a shattered aircraft stabbing into it. With more than 100 people at the hotel, the possibility of deaths was high. Further, traffic along the interstate highway near the airport was backing up, affecting the functioning of a significant element of this city of 700,000 people. In sum, fire and smoke, death and destruction, and an airplane were all part of the story. Elements from newsworkers' story typification would include fate, heroes, and sorrow (Vincent, Crow, & Davis, 1989) with a drama that would impact a large part of the community. From journalistic and entertainment perspectives, the plane crash could be considered a what-a-story.

The what-a-story was signified in a second way, however: competitive pressures. While these newsworkers were executing the daily routine, other local television stations had quickly designated the plane crash as a what-a-story and initiated special coverage during their morning programs. In the highly competitive business of local television, a station cannot affort to miss a story that other stations in its market consider as major news. This newsroom had three monitors behind the news desk, one for each network-affiliate station in the market. Producers kept another monitor in the control room to watch the competition as their own shows aired. When the what-a-story appeared as a special report on the two other local stations, newsworkers had to classify the occurrence as a what-a-story for business reasons alone.

The general manager's actions further highlighted competitive concerns. Normally, he avoided direct contact with the news department other than to suggest events that would "look good" for the station to cover. On the morning of the what-a-story, though, he stood over the news desk urging newsworkers to get on the air immediately, a highly unusual situation. Uneasily, the newsworkers obliged, shouting information to a frazzled news anchor on a newsroom set as a floor director counted down the seconds until airtime. Although what-a-story coverage was initiated amidst chaos, the following section will show a method in the newsworkers' madness.

COVERING THE WHAT-A-STORY

Because the everyday newswork routine centered around choosing stories from formal and informal lists, the what-a-story posed a problem. Most simply, there were no news budgets or other lists of possibilities to choose from, so a literal application of the everyday routine was impossible. As a what-a-story, the plane crash was journalistically and organizationally important, though, and these concerns mandated coverage. Two aspects were particularly salient. First, the station needed to initiate special reports. Second, reconnaissance was needed to determine the story's basic character. Both aspects would require a large resource commitment which excluded simultaneous execution of the everyday process. The timing of this particular what-a-story masked that fact, however. It would have been more visible, for example, if the crash had occurred later in the day, because reporters would have been pulled off their assigned stories and shifted to the what-a-story. But because the news day was still young when the plane hit, most reporters were still in the newsroom awaiting assignments.

Despite the early appearance of chaos, what-a-story coverage eventually came to mirror the everyday routine. Once the morning's special report coverage came under control, all the newsworkers met to plan evening newscasts. This was accomplished by typifying how the story "should go," and was based on previous work experiences and familiarity with similar stories covered by other media organizations.

A symbolic irony of this typification process was that the planning meeting took place in a windowless conference room behind a closed door.[3] "I think it's odd how they shut themselves off from the world in order to plan what's going on," the news department secretary commented as she glanced down the hallway toward the conference room. Table 1 presents a list of story possibilities that newsworkers wrote on the conference room dry-erase board. Many of the items were fairly predictable elements of a what-a-story. One especially telling indication of the what-a-story typification was an item about the city's disaster plan.

Table 1 about here

Besides typifying _stories_, newsworkers managed their departure from the everyday routine by typifying the _news sources_ belonging to a particular kind of story. Everyday newswork mainly involved talking with officials or organizationally-affiliated news sources. Reliance on these people simplified scheduling newscasts by reducing the time required to locate necessary information. It also reduced the probability that problems with reporters' assignments would disrupt the everyday procedure, because the majority of assigned stories included sources expected to be dependable for story information.

To compensate for the lack of prearranged news sources in what-a-story coverage, reporters relied on two groups of news sources: officials at the scene and eyewitnesses. Officials from fire departments, police departments, and government agencies had already proved dependable as news sources through everyday newswork and would be no problem. Eyewitnesses represented the equivalent of organizationally-affiliated news sources for a what-a-story, although they would be unlikely news sources during the everyday routine. By turning to these two groups of sources, then, newsworkers could mirror the desirable characteristics of everyday sources.

Table 2 shows lineups from the two evening newscasts that resulted from the what-a-story routine. Other than one story about the previous day's Wall Street stock market plummet, all other stories in the regular news segments concerned the what-a-story. Two items on the newscast lineup lend insights about the role of typification in newsworkers' efforts. One has already been mentioned: the local disaster plan. The other was a story slugged "coliseum disaster," and concerned the biggest what-a-story in the city's recent history. This second item suggested that the what-a-story typification was clearly in mind as newsworkers proceeded with the day's work, serving as a reminder to them of the magnitude of the news.

Table 2 about here

Overall, covering the what-a-story presented newsworkers with a situation that clearly departed from the everyday news process. Story selections needed to be made from typified ideas, rather than from lists of possibilities provided by news sources. News sources came from officials and eyewitnesses at the scene, rather than prearranged sources that came with sources' preplanned news items. Most importantly, although covering a what-a-story could not be accomplished through the everyday routine, newsworkers adopted a procedure that compensated for major differences so that key strategies of the everyday routine could still be implemented.

CONCLUSIONS

Observing newswork from inside the newsroom found that everyday procedures were designed to achieve orderly and trouble-free production of a newscast, much as other studies have suggested. Although newsworkers regularly achieved the appearance of a smooth, orderly process, their work actually involved constant adaptation to a variety of slightly unusual situations, none of which could be considered "normal." News judgment was important for a few stories, but many more stories were selected by typifying them into predictable occurrences that would help meet organizational expectations for a regularly scheduled newscast.

That orderly process actually hampered the detection of the what-a-story, but once the what-a-story was organizationally acknowledged, newsworkers adopted a new procedure for creating newscasts--based on typification--that embodied work strategies of the everyday routine. As such, newsworkers were able to reproduce the normal state of affairs in their work amidst chaos. Overall, the relative ease of newsworkers' adaptation to the new routine signified their familiarity with everyday newswork and their competence in being able to accomplish the _intent_ of that routine in the face of a highly unpredictable occurrence.

In sum, this study suggests that newswork in local television--either in everyday or crisis situations--is molded by newsworkers' efforts to predictably accomplish their work and meet organizational expectations. The outcome of these processes has important implications for the images of the world that television journalists portray to their viewers. Most simply, the routine approach to newswork found by this study conceives a product for local television that is unavoidably a _construction_ of reality about what takes place in a community, a construction that has emerged by convenience as much as by the craft of journalism.

# # #

NOTES

[1] Two distinct terms are used throughout this paper: newsworkers and reporters. "Newsworkers" pertains to those people responsible for selecting news items, making story assignments, and scheduling stories into newscasts. This term has been chosen to denote the similarity between television producers/editors/news directors, and people engaged in similar production and scheduling work in other fields. "Reporters" is used here in a more journalistic sense to mean people involved in the activities of gathering information and preparing news stories. The distinction between newsworkers and reporters here was not as apparent as in studies of newspaper journalists where the journalists have had greater individual autonomy.

[2] Fishman (1982) has commented that "few television reporters seem to cover beats in the same sense that their colleagues in the print media do." Television news organizations therefore look to print media for detection and interpretation of occurrences, he argues, so that newspaper reporters indirectly determine what most newsworthy events are for television journalists. That observation was consistent with this study's findings for stories not related to news releases or press conferences, although the station did cover the statehouse beat through a regularly assigned reporter, and student interns covered the police beat.

[3] Although story conferences were always held in this room, the door was usually open. Only during this planning session and two other instances over the two months at the station did newsworkers meet behind closed doors. Later conversations with newsworkers found that a common element of each session was conflict between producers and news directors over producers' coverage of key stories. The proceedings of the what-a-story planning session were actually pieced together through conversations with newsworkers and through story ideas listed on the conference room board.

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TABLE 1

Story list from the what-a-story planning session

Flames -- hotel
Debris -- bank
Bodies
Witnesses -- outside
Witnesses -- inside
Injured at hospital
Injured interview
News conference -- airport
News conference -- hospital
Morgue
Red Cross
A-7 Jet
Pilot route
Injured-dead list
Disaster plan

TABLE 2

Story lineups of the two evening newscasts
(crash-related stories are in uppercase)

5 p.m. Newscast	6 p.m. Newscast
SCENE SETTER--LIVE	OVERVIEW
THE CRASH	THE SCENE--LIVE
THE PILOT	THE CRASH--LIVE
AIR FORCE REACTION--ONE	NEARBY HOTEL WITH FAMILIES
AIR FORCE REACTION-TWO	SURVIVORS
INJURED--LIVE	A-7 JET PROFILE
INFORMATION PHONE NUMBER	Wall street story
LOCAL DISASTER PLAN	In-depth feature
COLISEUM DISASTER	Weather
Medical Matters	Sports
Sports	CRASH WRAP-UP
Weather	
Stock market	
Call for Help	
Sports	
Commentary on Wall Street	

Media Strategies: A Study of Two Presidencies

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Running Head: Presidencies

Abstract

This is a descriptive study of the Presidential administrations of Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon in their relationship with the mass media: their attempts at news-information management; censorship, by direct or indirect means; alteration of news and information to the American public; and their legislative proposals or use of such proposals as a threat to bring about changes in the broadcast media.

Media Strategies: A Study of Two Presidencies

The President of the United States is placed in a unique situation where he can make the news and then manage it. He may censor government information and use the prestige of his office to influence the news media and public affairs programming decisions. He may even use the media as a platform to create and maintain his political image. The unique relationship of the government to the broadcast media strengthens the President's position.

The potential power of the electronic media to influence the American public is well understood by the President. He knows that he may use it to build a positive political image of himself and his administration before the electorate. He is also aware that the electronic media can create a negative image. This image making is essential in order that he can gain the public support for his policies, programs and decisions to get his legislative proposals enacted by Congress (Mendlesohn and Crespi, 1973, p. 366.) Often, however, when the electronic media functions as both reporters and analyzers of news and public information, it is often at odds with the administration.

Every administration flinches and complains about the probing of the press but until the presidencies of Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon, no administration made a serious attempt to change the very structures which support and protect the press. (Fore, 1973, p. 37.)

Professional Journalists from newspapers, magazines, radio and television wrote of their concerns over management, censorship and governmental regulation of the news during their administrations.

Senator and former Presidential advisor Daniel Moynihan, in writing about the relationship of the President of the United States with the press, said

> In most essential encounters between the President and the press, the advantage is with the former. The President has a near limitless capacity to "make" news which must be reported, if only for the reason of competition between one journal, one medium, or another. (If anything, radio and television news is more readily subject to such dominance. Their format permits fewer "stories." The President-in-action almost always takes precedence.) . . . and for quite a long while, finally, a President who wishes can carry off formidable deceptions. (Strouse, 1975, p. 127.)

Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr., in his book, Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion, stated that

> Progressively during this century (and episodically, during the last), the President has become the source of initiative and stimulus for action. He has done so by exploiting his unequaled platform for popular leadership. This fact, with a burgeoning commercial news media, has virtually transformed the White House into the personification of the national government. (Cornwell, Jr., 1965, p. 5.)

The broadcast media, while inadvertently publicizing the President, underplays Congress because it is a large body of men and women and difficult to cover. The President, however, is very visible and easy to cover.

The President's relationship to the broadcast media is a unique one in which the broadcaster's right to the airwaves is licensed by a federal agency under the Communications act of 1934. The President appoints the FCC commissioners. The licensed broadcaster can be made to feel the pressure of, or at least react to, the threat of the possible loss of license, income and investment. He is ever reminded that his right to broadcast is granted to him by an authority of the Federal government during the periodic license renewal process. The President and his administration can also exert significant pressure by merely criticizing the broadcast industry or by proposing changes in broadcast regulation or legislation. It is important to note that an administration can effectively have an impact upon what is or is not broadcast. This is regularly done through a carefully planned communications strategy such as placing political or public relations pressure upon the industry, threats of new or stiffer regulation proposals sent to Congress, limiting sources and controlling the nature of the information to be made available to the news media.

This paper explores via description and comparison the communication strategy of the administrations of Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon. In order to organize the data, four main areas of concern were identified and used as a basis of descriptions and comparisons. They are news management, censorship, Presidential influence, and media regulation. News management refers to any overt attempt to manipulate what "news" or information is presented to the American public and by whom and when it shall be presented. Censorship refers to any deliberate act, either by direct order or indirect means, to influence, stop or alter news or cause the withholding of information from being disseminated to the media or press, or by them to the public. Presidential influence refers to any action, overtly or covertly, to exert economic, social, political or legal pressure on the broadcast media and/or the journalist reporting to the public for the purpose of altering or restricting the free flow of information of significant value to the public. Media regulation refers to any laws or rules enacted by Congress, Federal agencies, commissions and the Executive or to judicial orders or proposals to be enacted for the purpose of setting standards or codes of behavior for the broadcast industry.

Lyndon Johnson, within the first few months of his Presidency, established his pattern of informing the press and the public of his administration, clearly demonstrating the fact that the person in the White House determines policy and practices of the Executive branch of the government. He carefully molded his relationship to the White House press corps into a less formal situation than employed by his predecessors. He presented himself as just an "old country boy" from Texas. His news conferences were often called on short notice, using large, formal, pre-announced press conferences less often than John F. Kennedy. (Pollard, 1964, pp. 112-13.)

> Johnson regarded members of the press as similar to the membership of any other interest group. And he acted on the assumption. . . that he could find a way to bargain with them for good coverage and favorable stories. (Kearns, 1976, p. 247.)

President Johnson, himself said

> Reporters are puppets. . . they simply respond to the pull of the most powerful strings. Every reporter has a constituency in mind when he writes stories. Sometimes it is simply his editor or publisher, but often it is some political group he wants to please or some intellectual society he wants to court. The point is, there is always someone . . . There is no such thing as an objective news story. There is always a private story behind the public story. And if you don't control the strings to that private story, you will never get good news coverage . . . There is only one sure way of getting favorable stories and that is to keep their daily bread--the information, the stories, the plans, and the details they need for their work--in your own hands, so that you can give it out when and to whom you want. Even then nothing's guaranteed, but at least you've got the chance to bargain. (Kerns, 1976, p. 247.)

From 1963 to 1968 President Johnson had dominated public life as almost no one had before. His relationship with the press was distinctly a part of his personality. He was able to command attention, respect, and influence others on a one-to-one basis. He was able to dominate small groups. In this intimate environment Lyndon Johnson, the master politician was able to maintain his political mastery. He was concerned about what was written and said about him because he believed that the press stories influenced public opinion and a political leader in a democratic society who ignored his press would not remain in power for long. (Pomfret, 1966, p. 13.)

The President's press relations style consisted of spontaneous, informal news conferences with the regular White House correspondents. These meetings with the press gained an air of informality due to the fact that they were held in unusual places such as the back of a truck, on a bale of hay, or jogging around the White House grounds. There were fewer formal televised press conferences announced in advance. In both type of press conferences, Johnson used long introductory statements which precluded questions from the journalists. The press conferences did not yield much hard news. That came from the White House to a few privileged journalists or reporters who met with the President in off-the-record sessions of private interviews. ("Johnson and the Press--What the Grumbling is About," 1964, pp. 40-50.; Strout, 1966, pp. 8-9.; Wicker, 1965, p. 17.)

Bill Moyers stated that Johnson felt the press conference was for the convenience of the President to make known the administration's decisions, policies, and information to the public and not the press. ("Back of the Uproar About LBJ 'Managing' the News," 1966, pp. 42-43.) Speaking for Lyndon Johnson, Bill Moyers also said that both he and the President preferred to communicate with the American people through radio and television. (Semple, Jr., 1966, p. 12.) And Johnson did just that, perhaps more than any other President. He went before the cameras not only in the formal press conferences but for bill signing and special announcements. ("The Brand That's Being Burned into TV", 1965, pp. 55-56.)

Secrecy in the Johnson White House was no accident. LBJ felt that this was necessary so that he could keep his options open until the moment of decision. This involved all matters whether they involved national security or not. (Reston, 1968, p. 34., Rivers, 1967, p. 170.) He wished to be the source of the news and he clamped a tight lid on news sources, letting only a few trusted spokesmen speak for the administration. He was most successful in his attempt to limit news from sources other than the approved ones. (Krock, 1965, sec. 4, p. E9.) A very successful formula of news management and censorship took place since the news media had little more than what the government wanted it to have through its official information agencies. The television media personnel and executives were constant targets of pressure from such sources as the Department of Defense, the White House press secretary's office and even the President himself, not to broadcast or at least to modify the broadcast of a particular piece. The media journalists were subjected to governmental control over the President's broadcasts, such as his 1967 year-end conversation with the three networks which was supervised by White House aides from various departments within the Executive branch. (Gould, 1967, p. 28.) Presidential influence was brought to bear on Dan Rather's on-the-spot interview with Johnson on the White House lawn. Rather was allowed to use the story but not the interview. ("Rather Not", 1967, p. 38.) Thus, the Chief Executive continued to influence and exert control of the media.

President Johnson and his administration were also very active in the development of media policy. The President's office proposed to Congress an Executive office for communication policy development which would coordinate the development of all telecommunications policies including that of commercial broadcasting, common carrier services, public broadcasting and satellite, both domestic and international. ("Communications Policy", Summer 1968, p. 616.) Johnson proposed to Congress a bill to establish the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to provide funds for public television. (Kahn, 1973, pp. 114-16.) He also appointed a high level commission consisting of department heads in the Executive branch to study the communications crisis of developing technology and utilization. (Doyle, 1966, p. 10.)

President Johnson hid very well behind the equal time provision, section 315 of the Federal Communications Act, during the 1964 elections. He avoided all mention of the fact that Congress could suspend the rule. The Congress taking his lead did not, thereby preventing a debate between himself and Senator Barry Goldwater, the Republican candidate. ("Sec. 315 Debated, But No Action," 1964, p. 62.)

This describes Lyndon Johnson as a politician and a President who knew and understood the media. He used radio and television to reach the public, bypassing the Washington journalists, print and broadcast alike. He experimented with different formats, the informal spontaneous situation as well as the formal televised press conferences, yet he also maintained control over each so that only what he wanted the press and public to know would be presented. He used private and small group interviews when he could to influence reporters to present a favorable view of the administration. He was aware of the telecommunications crisis and took steps to guide and formulate communications policy through an agency charged with researching and proposing such policy to Congress. President Johnson's public relations style is best described by Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr. as a

> . . . massive and unrelenting use of available channels to reach the public, a restless experimentalism about technique, a tremendous (to the point of being disfunctional) amount of personal Presidential involvement in the process and a

> determination to wring the maximum in favorable and tactically useful publicity out of a pattern of feverish and carefully contrived White House activity. (Cornwell, Jr., 1966, p. 8.)

Lyndon B. Johnson was as controversial a politician as his successor Richard M. Nixon. Nixon was controversial throughout his career as a Congressman, United States Senator, Vice President and President. From the very beginning of his political career, he carefully used the electronic media to advance himself and his career. (Friel, 1968, p. 124.) In 1952 he delivered his famous "Checkers" speech before a national television audience which was designed to reach the American public and thereby override the decision of Republican party officials to drop him from the party's ticket for Vice President. Television would remain his favorite instrument of communication . . . but only when he could control or manipulate it. The news system as a whole, however, would become, in his mind, his prime enemy from the campaign of 1952 until . . . (White, 1975, p. 94.) his resignation from the office of the President in 1977.

Richard Nixon's feelings about the press were clearly demonstrated in an article by David Wise in Atlantic, entitled "The President and the Press." in which it was reported that

> Nixon's bitterness towards the press is legendary, perhaps best symbolized by his now classic remark after his defeat in the 1962 gubernatorial race in California: "You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore . . ." On the other

> hand some of the men who went to work for Nixon after he became President have often left the impression that they would very much enjoy kicking around the press. (WIse, 1973, p. 55.)

President Nixon looked upon the news media as simply a public relations problem. In the early fall of 1969, he sent a lengthy memorandum to H. R. (Bob) Halderman in which he called for a full time director of public relations to survey issues and areas in which the administration was likely to be attacked so that counter statements could be planned. (White, 1975, PP. 154-55.)

Nixon's press, radio and television relationship was based upon his distrust and dislike of the journalist commentators and media. He bitterly complained of being treated unfairly by the press when in reality, the press, at least the print media, backed him in his campaign for the presidency. (Schlesinger, Jr., 1974, p. 225.) The President, himself, virtually went into seclusion from the press and let deputies or aides speak for the White House. When he did make public appearances, he rarely spoke directly and directly on the issues raised by public interest or the press. Position papers were issued on important matters from staff members. (Ibid.) In this way Nixon could promulgate information in background briefings without any personal accountability for what was disclosed. The Press could only state that the story was from a "high White House source." If the story received adverse reaction, a repudiation of that source was made from the White

House or it was stated that the fault lay with the reporters who got their facts wrong. (Joseph, 1973, pp. 509-12.)

The President was not adverse however to appearing in public or on television as long as he orchestrated the occasion. In the first eighteen months, he was on prime time television more than the three previous three presidents in their combined terms of office. (Schlesinger, Jr., 1974, pp. 221-22.)

The Nixon administration's plan of operation in news management was essentially as follows. First, the President was isolated from the working press except in well planned and carefully controlled situations. Secondly, news items of major importance were given by other officials and White House aides. Many news sessions, especially on controversial issues or sensitive international affairs, were conducted in traditional (since the time of Franklin D. Roosevelt) background sessions. Third, the use of Henry Kissinger as well as other cabinet members to explain the administration's position, either on or off the record, was a part of the communications strategy. Fourth, an organized public relations staff was used to develop and plant stories in the various news media. Fifth, information was made available to the press only through official channels by controlling the sources of news within the numerous agencies and departments. Staff personnel were told not to deal with the press corps. ("The Administration: The Communications Gap," 1969, p. 22.)

Vice President Spiro Agnew raised the censorship issue with his Des Moines, Iowa, speech. He criticized the right of the electronic media to offer what he called instant analysis of the President's speech. He also charged that the TV networks influenced the public against the President and his administration while providing a ready national forum for militants and political activities.

The Nixon administration's primary anti-news and television network force was Clay T. Whitehead. He was appointed director of the Office of Telecommunications Policy. He took a strong anti-network stand in order to advance his political ambitions. This occurred publicly December 18, 1973 in his Indianapolis speech announcing the OTP's new licensing renewal bill. (Whitehead, 1974, pp. 479-80)

Local station owners were directly informed that the news and public affairs programming could be something that might cause them trouble. Specifically, this meant economic pressure would be exerted on the network news desks.

Whitehead also held meetings with broadcast station executives to discuss the state of government regulation, the vulnerability of licensees, and even the FCC's procedures, rules and the commissioners themselves. He informed them that if they agitated for a better balanced news analysis, the administration would support a law that extended the three year license renewal period to five years. (Buckley, Jr., 1973, p. 32)

The main thrust of the Nixon administration's attempt at censorship was the public criticism of network news organizations and certain news agencies which were interpreted as anti-administration. Public broadcasters also received a lot of attention due to the administration's dislike of their public affairs programming. The administration called for strong local programming to meet local needs which they felt were not met by the commercial networks. It was felt that public broadcasting should provide alternative programs which the local station could then choose to help them meet their local commitment. Presidential spokesman Patrick Buchanan publicly stated that President Nixon's veto of the long range funding bill of 1972 occurred because the administration found prominent personalities of PBS to be anti-administration. (Branscomb, 1974, p. 21.; New York Times, 1973, p. 31.) After the veto, several members of the Board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting resigned. Nixon replaced them with men who were sympathetic to his views, and the offensive public affairs programs were cut. After this the OTP began to work with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to determine policy and programming. As long as the administration was a dominant influence upon the PBS service, the Nixon administration looked differently upon it and temporarily stopped insisting upon local control. (Rowland, Jr., 1974, pp. 13-15.)

Phone calls and visits by members of the administration to network executives' offices and homes were used to apply pressure for the elimination of an offending news item or stories

Walter Cronkite. Daniel Schorr, after he was critical of the Nixon administration, was subjected to a full FBI investigation on the pretext that he was being cleared for a possible job within the administration. ("Bad Check," 1971, p. 79.) The White House staff and administration also applied the influence of the Oval Office to station managers who were invited to the White House for discussions on the license renewal proposals, protection from cable TV broadcasters, public television and license challenges. (Friendly, 1973, pp. 24-25.)

The total picture of the administration's actions clearly emerged as an organized plan of influence and management. The memo of Jeb Magruder to H. R. Halderman which listed various other means by which pressure could be applied, indicated a conscious program of Presidential pressure and influence. (White, 1975, pp. 155-56.)

Most of the legislative programs proposed by the administration, with a significant exception of the Executive order approved by the Congress in 1970 entitled the Reorganization Plan No. 1 which established the Office of Telecommunications Policy, were never enacted due to the politicalization of the issues by the White House. Close analysis of each legislative proposal and/or committee report for the administration policy in telecommunications showed the element of government control or influences, or at least the loophole which would allow government intervention. Close inspection of the Cabinet Committee for Cable

Television Report illustrated language which would allow for additional government regulation.

The license renewal bill proposed by the White House in no way lessened the regulation of the broadcasters by the government. It would have given the broadcasters a five year license instead of three. It would have changed the emphasis on meeting national standards to local standards. The broadcaster would be made responsible to the community he serves, seeing that programs met community needs and interest and were balanced when they dealt with controversial issues. (Buckley, Jr., 1973, pp. 382-83.) This could have forced additional changes within network news and public affairs programming. In effect, the networks would be forced to avoid controversial issues or to change the content in such a way that the local broadcaster could accept them. The aim of the license renewal bill seemed to be an attempt at government control over the national news and public affairs programming through the local broadcaster, subject to licensing by the government. (Fore, 1973, p. 37.; "What's Their Line," 1973, p. 7.)

President Nixon , his staff and members of the administration understood the need for good and acceptable national press and TV coverage. To achieve this end, they countered stories that were unfavorable using various means.

The comparisons of the Presidential administrations of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon generated the following information concerning their respective attempts at developing and using news management, censorship, pressure or influence and media regulation or control.

News Management

News management was attempted by both administrations; however, the styles of each President were different:

1. Johnson acted as his own public relations man much of the time. He wanted to be the dispenser of information. Nixon avoided the press and left news management to others within the administration.

2. The background briefing was a favorite tactic used by both administrations. Both learned the use of the formal press conference, Nixon's more so than Johnson's.

3. The management techniques of both administrations included the control of government employees and officials so that they could or would not deal with the press. They also used selected spokespersons to give out only the information they wanted to be disseminated.

4. Both Presidents liked national television coverage of their activities and were innovative in arranging their schedules, such as foreign and domestic travel and bill signing, in order to achieve the best coverage. Both expressed the conviction that television best served their needs when used for personal appearances to make known government policies or crises, without subsequent questioning by the press corps.

Censorship

Presidents Johnson and Nixon both considered secrecy necessary in order for the President to deal with sensitive foreign and domestic problems. They employed a variety of methods to restrain the free flow of information from the government to the public:

1. The Johnson Administration excelled in putting pressure on government employees and officials to eliminate contact with the press. He was even able to keep reporters from the White House staff in the WHite House offices and Executive Office building, with the exception of pre-arranged press sessions and then only with those who knew the limits of public information. The Nixon administration made similar attempts but were not as successful. Both Johnson and Nixon had key spokespersons designated to speak for the administration.

2. Censorship requests were made of reporters and news executives by both administrations in the name of "national security" or "in the best interest of the country."

Presidential Influence

During the administrations of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, Presidential aides as well as the men themselves used the prestige and influence of the Chief Executive to influence the decisions of network executives on what to broadcast, alter or edit from news and public affairs programs:

1. During both administrations, officials called to complain about programs of commentators that they disliked.

2. Government officials arranged face-to-face visits with network executives in their New York offices.

3. At times, when a program or commentator was seen as a nuisance, or troublesome, or dealing with sensitive matters, network executives would be summoned to Washington to meet with high level administration officials.

4. During both administrations, various Federal departments and investigative agencies, such as the FBI, were called upon to apply pressure and investigate reporters. A White House aid in the Nixon administration suggested that not only the FBI but the Justice Department, the IRS and the FCC should be deliberately used to apply pressure on reporters and networks.

5. Both Presidents met formally and informally with members of the press in off-the-record sessions as a means to gain support.

6. There were also sessions with local station executives and editors and publishers.

7. The Nixon administration did set one precedent by conducting social-business sessions with members of independent Federal agencies. No administration had ever done that before.

8. During both administrations the American people were often the target of Presidential public relations to get support; however, the Nixon administration focused a public relations

campaign against the bias of network news and public affairs programming.

Media Regulation

The Presidential administrations of both men were interested and involved in telecommunications policy;

1. During the Johnson years, legislation and agreements were established on international communications satellite systems, a proposal for a domestic satellite system, and the creation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The Nixon administration was also involved in international communication satellites, common carrier services, domestic satellite, cable television, public broadcasting and the commercial television industry.

2. Johnson, towards the end of his last term in office, set up a commission to study the problems of the communications industry. Out of this came a proposal to Congress to establish a department of Telecommunications in the Federal Government. The significant legislation of the Nixon administration was the Re-Organization Plan No. 1 which established the Office of Telecommunications Policy (OTP) within the White House. This Reorganization Plan was similar to the proposal of the Johnson administration. The OTP became active in all aspects of the telecommunications industry, e.g., license renewal bill and long term funding for public broadcasting.

3. In the proposals and legislation of the Johnson

administration, the element of governmental regulation or control was ever present either by direct governmental monopoly or by indirect financial or regulatory means. There were no proposals for deregulation.

Presidents Johnson and Nixon both took advantage of existing legislation or authority to serve their purposes:

1. Johnson used the equal time provision of the Communications Act to avoid debate with his political opponents.

2. Under the Johnson administration, the Justice Department proposed that the FCC end cross ownership of the media in single markets and began legal proceedings in pending cases.

3. The Nixon administration threatened to apply more stringent interpretation of the Fairness Doctrine against broadcasters.

4. President Nixon used the provisions of the Public Communications Act of 1967 to review and control the budget for public broadcasting. He also appointed men to the board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting who actively supported his views on the nature of news and public affairs programming.

5. Nixon also used his veto power against the first long range funding legislation for public broadcasting because of his dislike for its programming.

Conclusions

The Johnson and Nixon administrations were engaged in news management techniques and censorship and extended the prestige and power of the Presidency to influence news and public affairs programming. They were also interested and involved in media legislation and establishing governmental agencies to develop and propose national policies in telecommunications. The differences between the administrations in press-media relations were only ones of style and variations in specific methods.

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SETTING THE MEDIA'S AGENDA: A POWER BALANCE PERSPECTIVE

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SETTING THE MEDIA'S AGENDA: A POWER BALANCE PERSPECTIVE

In Roman mythology, the god Janus could look two directions at once, thanks to his two faces. Appropriately, his name was given to the first month of the year, which stands between the new year and the old. Like Janus, the agenda of issues and events found in the news media assumes a similar forward and backward looking stance. This media agenda simultaneously projects forward a powerful structuring effect on audience perceptions, while itself indicating the powerful influences behind its creation.

The media have an indirect, yet powerful and pervasive, effect on public opinion by limiting and prioritizing public perceptions of important issues. By formally conceptualizing and testing this agenda-setting process, McCombs and Shaw (1972) set the research agenda for droves of communication researchers. In their comprehensive review of this research tradition and related policy agenda-setting studies, Rogers and Dearing (1988, p. 579-80) concluded that (1) "The media influence the public agenda," (2) "The media agenda seems to have direct, sometimes strong, influence upon the policy agenda," and the media indirectly influence policy as well because (3) "The public agenda, once set by, or reflected by, the media agenda, influences the policy agenda." By focusing on these influences, the agenda-setting approach implicitly adopts the pluralistic values of democratic theory, bringing public opinion to center stage. Assuming that public opinion directly affects public policy makes setting the public agenda an important media effect.

In recent years, communication researchers have begun to look backward as well, toward the origins of the media agenda. Perhaps, as McCombs suggests, having satisfied themselves that media content did have effects, communication scholars felt justified in turning their attention inward toward the processes creating that content (personal communication, 1988). Effects on opinion remain important but in different respects. This shift away from the "public" is perhaps more attuned to an elite-centered view of political influence. The public does not keep up with politics or participate enough to assign it a direct role in the political process. Rather, policy alternatives originate with elites, who seek to manage the climate of opinion in their favor. Elites contend with each other, often through the media, for favorable opinion, as one of many scarce resources (e.g., Paletz & Entman, 1981, p. 184-195). Focusing on agenda creation highlights these processes.

This paper picks up where Rogers and Dearing (1988) left off, by reviewing and providing a theoretical framework for the burgeoning number of studies seeking to explain the media's agenda. These studies are diverse and are knitted together only loosely, if at all, by the agenda-setting metaphor. But then, one strength of the robust agenda concept is its ability to pull together previously unconnected lines of research. For now we use Rogers and Dearing's (1988) term "media agenda setting" (as distinct from public and policy agenda setting) to refer to those studies using the media agenda as a dependent variable.[1] Media agenda setting includes all of the influences affecting media content. Using the agenda concept provides a familiar bridge between the effects tradition in political communication and the growing body of research that seeks to explain the origins of media messages.

Power perspective

In reviewing media agenda setting, this paper focuses on power relations as a way of organizing a diverse set of research studies. Power is central to social analysis, whether openly examined or not. Studies can be compared based on where they look for the exertion of power. A Marxist scholar, for example, typically views the most significant power as ultimately lying in society's economic formations. Studies of individual journalists imply that they have significant power in creating the news product. Organizational analysis, on the other hand, assumes that individuals are constrained in their power by structures beyond their immediate control. Similarly, we can consider some organizations more powerful than others. Setting the media agenda is itself an exercise in power, as many competing factions strive to get on the agenda and do so in ways favorable to their interests. Recognizing this fact helps clarify the power relationships within and across social formations that result in the agenda displayed in the media. In doing so, I hope to point out the limitations of the agenda concept as applied to this body of research and to show the theoretical utility of the "power" concept. Thinking of power helps both clarify important theoretical relationships and generate ideas for empirical measurement.

Diversity of Studies

The diversity of media agenda setting studies complicates finding any single theoretical approach. Indeed, Swanson (1988, p. 614) notes that the very meaning of "agenda" is different at each level of analysis, and that "each level of agenda-setting is likely best understood by theoretical conceptions that are specific to that level." This heterogeneous research ranges across many different levels of analysis and research traditions, unlike the traditional, more homogeneous agenda setting studies. The major agenda-setting variables--the media agenda and some measure of public opinion with various audience characteristics serving as intervening factors--have been used similarly across many studies. The underlying process is psychological and straightforward. The media manipulate the saliences of agenda items, by paying more or less attention to them, thus, cuing audience members to their importance in a process mediated by each individual's need for orientation.

When we look for the media agenda's antecedents, however, we are open to the whole wide range of cultural, institutional and organizational forces, which leads to an equally wide range of theoretical and methodological perspectives. Thus, unlike the public agenda setting studies, carried out largely by communication scholars, media agenda setting has received attention from many scholars from as many social science disciplines, bringing their own economic, political, sociological, psychological, and anthropological perspectives. In addition, media agenda studies lead naturally to normative and ideological questions. Taking the media agenda as problematic and not as a given encourages the difficult and power-oriented questions of whose values are reflected, whose are suppressed, and what values should be on the agenda? Not surprisingly, many media agenda setting studies have an explicit ideological stance or make prescriptions toward improving media content or revealing its underlying biases.

Media Consonance and Convergence

There has been no shortage of studies examining the media agenda (taken broadly as news content) as a subject in itself. The "agenda" metaphor makes easy intuitive sense, but is flexible in the definitions that can be applied. Comparing agendas across media shows important regularities in both print (e.g., Bigman, 1948; Donohue & Glasser, 1978; Gieber, 1956; Riffe & Shaw, 1982) and broadcasting (Altheide, 1982; Buckalew, 1969; Capo, 1983; Dominick, 1981; Foote & Steele, 1986; Fowler & Showalter, 1974; Graber, 1971; Hester, 1978; Lemert, 1974; Meeske & Javaheri, 1982; Riffe, Ellis, Rogers, Van Ommeren & Woodman, 1986; and Weaver, Porter & Evans, 1984). Indeed, the degree of similarities in media agendas has been one factor leading scholars to examine the powerful organizational and institutional forces behind this standardization. As befits the value placed on diversity, the terms applied to this similarity have somewhat pejorative connotations: consonance, conformity, duplication, homogeneity, standardization, "three-in-one news," and uniformity

In recent years, media convergence on the big stories seems to have grown: African famine, AIDS, Mideast terrorism (the TWA hijacking and various hostage dramas), and the farm crisis, not to mention drugs (See Danielian & Reese, 1989; Reese & Danielian, 1989). There is empirical support for this hunch: Merriam and Makower (1988, p. 43) report that early in the 1980s "only one or two stories a year commanded 10 percent or more of all national coverage in any two-week period. By 1985, there were 14 such stories. In 1986, there were 23, from the space shuttle and Chernobyl disasters to tax reform and the federal budget deficit." Have our problems grown so severely in just a few short years, or have the media converged on selected issues with more vigor?

A POWER PERSPECTIVE ON CREATING THE NEWS AGENDA

Standardization of media content, reliance on a few key sources and convergence on big stories, in ways predicted poorly by objective conditions, leads us to question how related news is to real events. Political theory has the same problem media scholars have had in explaining how "a previously dormant issue can be transformed into a highly salient political controversy at a specific point when the basis of the grievance has existed for some time; for example the pollution problem" (Cobb & Elder, 1972, p. 9). Important power roles are clearly being played out behind the scenes.

Although many studies have explored influences on the media agenda, few have carried the agenda paradigm over intact from the traditional agenda-setting public opinion studies. That is, few studies identify a specific agenda of issue priorities originating with influential news sources that set, in turn, the media agenda. Exceptions would include Turk's (1986) study of the Public Information Office's public relations efforts in two Louisiana state agencies. She showed that newspapers using those office's information featured an agenda of issues that reflected the issue agenda and priorities contained in the information efforts by the agencies. In addition, the reanalyses of White's (1950) gatekeeper study by McCombs and Shaw (1977) and Hirsch (1977), and Whitney and Becker's (1982) experimental test resemble the traditional agenda-setting model, in showing that the agenda established by the wire-service influenced the newspaper editor. The remainder of this paper takes a broader view of influences on the media agenda, considering any forces acting on news media content, including what doesn't get in the news media, what does, and how it is presented. These influences may be viewed as coming from within or without of the news organization. I will review these two major perspectives with emphasis on the role of power in each.

Power as a Relationship

Before proceeding further a working definition of power is needed. "Power" is used often in everyday conversation, to refer to such traits as "strength," "clout," "influence." Social analysts use it too, but often without an adequate theory of power to go with it. For example, media are said to be powerful to the extent that they can produce powerful effects in an audience. Powerful media produce powerful effects. But who is actually producing these effects? Often, the media just pass along what they are given by other power centers. Can the media be said to be powerful if they simply serve as a conduit for the power of others? If the President makes a speech, and the media carry it, and the speech has the desired effect, can the media be said to have produced the effect? By not tracing the chain of power far enough we fail to come to grips with the origins of power. Clearly, the power of the media is a function of their relations with other power centers. How can this relationship be conceptualized?

Both coercive and exchange relations of power may be found in media-society relationships.[2] A newspaper may expose a corrupt politician, in spite of efforts to suppress the story. Or the politician may have enough resources to sue the paper and effectively shut it down. More frequently, the politician uses the media and vice versa in a mutually agreeable manner. In either case, both seek to further their own interests. These are the kinds of relations that will be of particular interest here. More often than not, the relationship between media and society can be described as symbiotic. It is precisely because it is symbiotic that it often does not appear that either party is exerting power over the other.

Many measures can be used to signify power relations. Domhoff (1970), for example, looks for the accretions and correlates of power in his study of social elite classes: Who wins, who governs, who has the most of what society has to offer? In exchange relationships, Parenti (1978) notes that those with the most to gain are the least powerful. Thus, we should look for what resources each party commands. How dependent is one on the other, and for what? Who has more at stake in the relationship? These questions suggest several indicators of power that can be applied to the media source relationship below.

The Media Agenda and Values

Critical studies of influences on news content generally judge media performance by some value-based standard related to power. They differ according to how political power is thought to be exercised in society. The dominant democratic pluralist model of society values diversity: the more media voices the better. This pluralistic model of media performance is found in many policy discussions as well. The Federal Communication Commission, for example, chose to de-regulate much of broadcasting during the Reagan administration, reasoning that the number of media outlets made it possible for market forces to ensure diversity. Power is viewed as distributed across many competing interests. These interests act as "veto groups" as they vie with one another to create a more or less stable political equilibrium. Even the elites are viewed as sufficiently divided as to make unlikely any undue concentration of power (See e.g., Rose, 1967). As McQuail (1986, p. 143) states, the relevant question in media research using a pluralistic model is "whether media offer opportunities for politically diverse audiences and/or audience interests to flourish." Studies based on a pluralistic model of society often do not examine power explicitly. They accept the power relations in society as a given, for power is not considered problematic if the many diverse "veto group" power centers carry on a self-maintaining and balanced political process.

A more critical, radical view of media focuses on top-down control of the media agenda. Power is viewed as much more concentrated, whether in elites or propertied classes, and the media agenda is seen as both expressing and furthering the power of these interests. Critical scholars focus on showing how the restriction of voices furthers class dominance, making power a central concern. This is particularly so, because individuals are viewed as unable to compete effectively against major power centers in society, which use their power to manipulate people in ways contrary to their natural interests. Institutions are not accepted as a given, but rather examined in terms of their implications for existing power structures (e.g., Parenti, 1978, 1986).

The theory of hegemony, as proposed by Gramsci (1927/1971) has been a strong theme running through critical analyses of media. Hegemony refers to the means by which the ruling order maintains its dominance, and to the systematic engineering of mass consent. Media institutions serve a hegemonic function by continually producing a cohesive ideology, a set of common-sensical values and norms, that serves to reproduce and legitimate the social structure (See also Gitlin, 1980, p. 252-282). Hegemonic values in news are said to be particularly effective in permeating "common sense," because they are placed there not by coercion, but indirectly through the inter-connections between the media and other power centers. Hegemony may be considered the way ruling elites legitimate their power into authority. Assuming that the media serve a hegemonic function, however, does not in itself explain through what mechanisms this happens. Neither does it explain the variations in hegemonic control--subversive elements do creep in. If hegemony were completely effective, nothing could alter the status quo. A closer examination of the variations in power between the news media and society helps color in some of the underlying processes that contribute to or erode hegemonic control.

Problems with the Agenda Metaphor

The agenda metaphor itself has implications for how power is conceptualized. One problem with metaphors, of course, is that by highlighting one model of reality, it makes it difficult to view a phenomenon in any other way. The agenda metaphor is confined, by definition, to manifest news coverage. This is appropriate for a theory that predicts effects of media coverage, but it becomes problematic when we consider the media agenda itself as the dependent variable. By confining ourselves to those issues that made the agenda we exclude all those that perhaps should have been there but weren't. In addition, as Schattschneider (1960) argues, groups go "public" when they want to enlarge the field of play to increase their power position. We expect issues to emerge when there are internal disagreements among elites--the many other things on which elites agree remain beneath the surface of media attention.

In the related agenda-building tradition in political science, issues are usually defined around contention (e.g., Cobb & Elder, 1972). Issues arise when competing interests vie for distribution of scarce resources. This model does not deal effectively, however, with the problem of non-issues, that is, when contention is not overt and obvious. In critiquing the news agenda metaphor, we can borrow some of the same criticisms made about policy agendas. First, issues and events are clearly not independent "items." As Rogers and Dearing (1988) note, it's important to recognize that one item influences others. Devoting more attention to one item, leaves less room for others. Indeed, as community power theorists tell us, by promoting one agenda item, civic activists may drive other issues away (See Crenson, 1971, p. 165). [Bachrach and Baratz (1962), for example, criticize pluralists who focus only on overt decisions by governing boards.] They suggest examining how the scope of the process is narrowed to only those issues of innocuous nature to A. Just because issues make the agenda (media or otherwise) does not necessarily mean they are the key issues--this ignores the restrictive face of power (their "second face").

Molotch and Lester (1974) make a similar point: By taking decisional "events" pluralists have guaranteed diversity by focusing only on those issues on which elites disagree. Lukes (1974) goes a step further by arguing that traditional community power studies also overlook those non-articulated conflicts of power that are prevented from even coming up (his third dimension of power). Lukes argues that the most effective power prevents conflict from arising in the first place. The media agenda, too, is confined by definition to those issues that were allowed into the public policy forum, and comes nowhere near covering the range of actual and incipient conflicts in society. To understand the range of forces acting on the agenda, we must also come to grips with those items not allowed on the agenda, or those not even defined as potential issues.

Many critical scholars like Parenti (1986), Herman (1986) and Domhoff (1967, 1970, 1979) view the mass media as little more than accessories for the ruling elites. The media are not, however, simply a conduit for the status quo, but represent a power center in their own right. A complete analysis needs to consider how media interact with other powerful agencies in society, to account for the complexity, tensions and variations in a mediated society. The connections between elite centers and mainstream media are not always obvious. The task of this paper is to point out and explicate some of these connections that underlie power relationships, and discuss their implications for media agenda setting.

POWER WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

The Organizational Approach

Among the most prominent strands of media sociology research has been the organizational, a perspective that views media as complex organizations with their own goals and routines shaping the news product. Taken broadly this includes all levels of media production, from the individual journalists to the larger media industry. Power is clearly defined in an organizational setting. When journalists become members of organizations, they submit themselves to the power of the organization, a form of legitimate power often characterized as authority. In exchange for having a job, the worker conforms to the requirements of the organization (as citizens submit to the authority of the government--most readily when its power is considered legitimate). This approach helped balance the early individual level analyses, characterized by the original "gatekeeper" study by White (1950). His analysis of "Mr. Gates" focused on an editor's subjective reasons for picking stories for the paper. The large number of autobiographies by journalists is one indication that they certainly would like to believe the romantic image of the crusading reporter. If the early studies gave the individual journalist too much power in determining the news product, the organizational approach has severely limited that power by enclosing journalists within concentric rings of constraining routines, organizational and institutional pressures.

Our understanding of the newsmaking process has been advanced considerably by research that ties together these different levels of mass media decision making. Three in particular have provided an excellent explication and review of studies at different levels: Hirsch (1977), Dimmick and Coit (1982), and Ettema, Whitney and Wackman (1987). I won't repeat their reviews except to point out their similarities. Although they differ somewhat in labelling, all three reviews conceptualize the media decision-making system as a hierarchy, such that decisions made at one level constrain those made at lower levels. Organizations are viewed as rational goal-directed entities that structure themselves internally and within industries to maximize their goals. The (1) the individual/occupational (2) intra-organizational, and (3) inter-organizational levels may be considered to progress from a closed-system framework, in which the organization is taken as the surrounding environment of system activity, to an open-system perspective, which emphasizes larger units of analysis, activities at organizational boundaries, and explains change through external causes (Hirsch, 1977, p. 18).

Individual/Occupational. According to Hirsch (1977, p. 17), the occupational level "focuses on occupational roles, careers, and the interaction of mass media organizations with the individuals fulfilling them," exemplified by White's "gatekeeping" study. These studies attempt to explain variations in news content by variations in the individual: such as ideological slant (Lichter, Lichter & Rothman, 1986), values (Johnstone, Slawki & Bowman, 1973; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986), and perceptions of the audience (Pool & Schulman, 1959).[3]

Intra-organizational. The second level considers the structure of the organization as a whole and how it adapts to its environment. Studies at this level recognize that organizations exert social control on their members and proceed to ask "who exercises power and for what reasons" (Hirsch, 1977, p. 26). Journalistic norms and bureaucratic routines of news work are seen as rational ways that the organization copes with uncertainty. Sigal (1973) and Gans (1979) have produced excellent analyses of the internal workings of The New York Times and the Washington Post; and CBS, NBC, Time, and Newsweek, respectively. The differences between the individual and intra- organizational perspectives is shown by Bantz, McCorkle and Baade (1980), who argue that a local television news organization conforms to a "factory" model. The division of labor produces a "product" efficiently, but the process is at odds with a craft tradition, which values worker autonomy and control.

Inter-organizational/institutional/industrial. This level "examines relationships between organizations or professions and the larger societal environment in which they operate" (Hirsch, 1977, p. 17). Studies at this level explain how organizations are affected by other influential media and wire services, as well as by their political and legal environment. The latter focuses mostly on overt influence by the FCC, anti-trust law, etc. Issues of cross-ownership of media, and competition are also pertinent here. Industrial analysis examines organizations as but one part of a more complex inter-related industry system. Turow (1985), for example, examines how organizations within media industries depend on one another for scarce resources. One organization may be said to exert power over another by influencing the other's agenda, as elite newspapers often do for television. Conversely, television may be said to have had a powerful influence on the shape of USA Today, designed to appeal to TV viewers with its bright colors and brief news items. The wire services have power when they exert a standardizing influence on news content in what Turow (1985) calls their "linking pin" roles.

Problems with Organizational analysis

The organizational perspective necessarily focuses attention inwards toward the organization, its structure and goal-seeking processes. Obviously, though, these activities do not take place in a vacuum. By focusing on the organization we place it at the center of analysis and consider other organizations only as providers of "resources" that the media organization needs to carry on its affairs. The media organization has power over people within it and also over other organizations. But, in turn, media organizations have power exerted over them. The organizational perspective restricts the power of journalists, who are viewed as constrained by the power of the bureaucratic structure they work in. Alternatively, journalists may be viewed as agents of the organization's power in their dealings with those outside the organization. The organization empowers the journalist. A network correspondent, for example, stands a greater chance of speaking with the president than would the average citizen. These power relations external to the organization take place at the boundaries of the organization, at each of the three levels discussed above, but tend to be obscured by an organizational emphasis.

According to Hirsch (1977), power relations between organizations fall under the third, inter-organizational, level, where "open-systems" analysis is most often found. Here, though, we most often find studies of relations between organizations from a single industry. Turow (1985), for example, borrows from industrial sociology in applying a resource dependency model to the mass media industry. He identifies several different organizations within media industries (producers, investors, patrons, creators, unions, distributors) that have power roles in that they control scarce resources needed by others. This "industrial" model, applicable to both news and entertainment, conforms to Hirsch's (1977, p. 13) call to de-emphasize the "uniqueness" of news relative to entertainment, arguing that the organizational similarities outweigh the differences. It fails to deal effectively, however, with the most important inter-organizational power relation for news organizations-- between the media organization and news sources. In Turow's "industry centric" model, sources are considered just another "resource" necessary for the organization to reach its goals. These resources are not provided by disinterested parties, however, but rather by powerful political and economic forces with their own value-based messages to promote. The resulting content is a direct result of the relative power that these external sources are able to exert.

Organizational analysis naturally impels attention to the center of organizations, but this has the effect of giving low priority to the media source relationship, a key interaction at the "boundaries." In addition, Hirsch (1977) observes correctly that studies at the individual/occupational level theoretically deal with people at all levels of the organization, but practically speaking, concentrate most often on the most available subjects, front-line journalists. This has the effect of ignoring important interactions at other levels, such as between those more elite media decision makers (editors, news directors, etc.), who interact with other powerful elites outside the organization (Gans, 1979, for example, notes that top newsmagazine editors are expected to circulate with other movers and shakers to get ideas about important issues). Paradoxically, editors exert significant power over reporters, but studies of them as individuals are still considered part of the occupational (individual) level of analysis. Yet, they act as agents of the power of the organization in their interactions with groups outside their own organization. Consequently, these top level media workers are often overlooked in organizational studies.

Another drawback of the organizational perspective is shared with functional analysis. Functional and organizational analysts observe enduring structures and patterns of behavior within organizations. From these they work backwards, inferring that they are functional for the organization in fulfilling its goals. For a variety of reasons, observed structures may not be functional (e.g., Stinchcombe, 1968). Similarly, not all routines are in the best interests of the news organization, which depends on an audience accepting its product. Accepting public relations video releases may be functional for a television station by getting news content efficiently (conveniently and free), but it may not be functional for its long-term credibility.

In his critique of the "gatekeeper"/organizational paradigm, Herman (1986, p. 174), observed that it offers "little in the way of dynamics that would show how the media ...are manipulated (or co-operate) in mobilization by others." Most studies that do examine power relations between news organizations and non-news industry forces are restricted to the wielding of overt power. For example, Warner (1968) stressed the importance of the Federal Communications Commission as a major concern of network executives. Lowry (1971) found that Spiro Agnew's direct attack on the networks affected their coverage. By concentrating on what behaviors and structures are functional for the organization, we often overlook the fact that these same bureaucratic routines and journalistic views are also highly functional for external news sources. Routines of newswork provide levers that power centers on the outside can grasp to influence news content. In the 1988 presidential campaign, Joan Didion (1988, p. 21) observed how political journalists reported clearly "setup" campaign events as though they were not. Because reporters like covering campaigns--it leads to prestige, advancement, gets them out on the road--they "are willing, in exchange for 'access,' to transmit the images their sources wish transmitted. They are even willing, in exchange for certain colorful details around which a 'reconstruction' can be built,...to present these images not as a story the campaign wants told but as fact."

Candidates use the journalistic reward system as leverage to get what they want in the press. A focus on power outside the organization prompts the question: Are campaign coverage routines equally functional for both news and political organizations, or have certain routines been exploited to the greater advantage of the source? In short, finding what makes organizations tick does not provide an adequate understanding of whose interests they serve. The news organization provides many access points for the expression and reception of power, as will be discussed below.

POWER ACROSS ORGANIZATIONAL BOUNDARIES

Defining Terms: Media and Sources

Media are often conceived of as a monolithic structure, although obviously they consist of many individual organizations, ranging widely in resources, and, consequently power. In the discussion below I refer to media as separate organizations, or classes of organizations (e.g., national, local), when a relationship is referred to. The news media interact with many organizations, including the political system, public interest watchdog groups, and advertisers. No single adequate term exists to refer to these various other power centers that media deal with. As Blumler and Gurevitch (1986) note, "source" is ambiguous and has been applied to both organizations and groups, and to individuals representing them. I use the term source to refer to those many other entities that media enter into power relationships with, specifically as directly affects content. I will discuss power relations between media organizations to the extent that they increase or undermine an organization's power relative to other sources.

Power as Dependency

Dimmick and Coit (1982) contrast the hierarchical power exercised within organizations to that exercised across organizations where no clear hierarchy exists. This latter form of power is more subtle perhaps but no less important to our understanding of the news process. Looking horizontally across boundaries requires viewing media workers as empowered by their organization in their dealings with others, and in turn having power exerted on them from those outside their organization. This power is most often a function of inter-dependencies. This notion is related to the dependency theory of Defleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) and the resource dependency perspective outlined by Turow (1985). Both consider media and other social systems as needing each other for vital resources. Dependency exists to the extent that the satisfaction of one party's goals is contingent on resources controlled by another (Defleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). Inter-dependency means that one party is not completely powerful over the other, although the relationship may be asymmetrical. A media organization, for example, may seek out other sources, with varying degrees of difficulty, while sources may seek other channels for their views. This power can be observed in a number of ways by looking at the ways resources are shared in attaining mutual goals.

Media Power

The media can be thought to have power in two inter-related ways: in relation to sources, and relation to other media. By being powerful among media an organization also ensures a more solid power position with sources. Media power can be thought to vary to the extent that an organization has unique resources desired by sources. Under this definition, the power of media, elite media in particular, has certainly grown over the last several decades. As society grows in complexity, a few central elite media may be considered vital for providing a central forum for reporting and coordinating elite opinion (See Lasorsa & Reese, 1990; Weiss, 1974). This high profile and the influence the elite media have over other media mean they have tremendous resources to bestow on or withdraw from sources. Small low-power sources (primary candidates, small corporations, low level functionaries in government) can benefit enormously if The New York Times, for example, chooses to bestow favorable coverage. One significant way a media organization may manifest its power is in its ability to define a reality through reporting and structuring of information, in spite of efforts by involved sources to dictate a different reality. In the case of the "Pentagon Papers," The New York Times may be said to have had power because it was able to dictate that reality in spite of government efforts to prevent it. More often, perhaps, sources are able to dictate the reality. Former presidential spokesman Larry Speakes encouraged favorable coverage of President Reagan by thinking like a television producer, providing photo opportunities with dramatic visuals, while restricting other possible coverage opportunities. Did he have power over the network correspondents? Yes, to the extent that correspondents were obliged to cover a reality dictated by the president. (Note that often TV reporters would try to undermine this power by commenting on the public relations techniques used to manipulate them, but they covered them nevertheless. See Levy, 1981, for an analysis of this phenomenon.)

Media organizations also vary in power relative to each other, with the more powerful helping define reality for others. But this dependency runs both ways. Ownership of one organization by another is an obvious case of inter-media dependency. Additionally, though, weaker media depend on the more powerful media for guidance, confirmation of news judgment and the news itself, through, for example, wire and other syndicated services. One media organization's power to dictate a reality, however, is contingent on whether other organizations will accept it. More powerful media depend on less powerful ones for financial (e.g., syndication fees), and moral support (many papers didn't follow the Washington Post's lead in Watergate). Wire services are considered powerful, but they are nevertheless dependent on their clients. UPI, in trying to trim its budget, announced recently that it would focus on fewer stories, but stories having a good chance of being used by clients. It said it would develop a publishability/ broadcastability quotient, to determine the level of acceptability of a particular story ("Supply Side," 1988).

We generally think of national media as more powerful than local media. Local media have a smaller audience resource (circulation) and are more directly dependent on their own communities for economic support. Editors and producers are inter-twined with community economic interests, while national media revolve around national power centers rather than any single community. [Power disparities are particularly apparent when a president is interviewed by a local television news anchor, or when a "60 Minutes" camera crew is sent to do an expose' in a small community.]

Source Power

The power of sources is somewhat easier to conceptualize. We are accustomed to thinking of people and groups as in or out of the "power structure." Officials have the weight of authority behind them, while others develop other resources of value to media, such as specialized expertise (think tank experts, academicians, etc.). In recent years, scholars have become more sensitive to the power of sources over the media agenda, rejecting the naive notion of the media agenda as a town meeting. Elite sources, in particular, wield much more power over the media agenda than do individuals and public interest groups. Paletz and Entman (1981) argue that the agenda originates with elites and eventually filters down to the public. Rogers and Dearing (1988, p. 578) found no significant effect of the public's agenda on the media's agenda, which is far more responsive to the policy agenda (They note that Congressional action on a 1966 auto safety law caused a jump in *The New York Times* coverage of traffic safety, although auto fatalities had been rising for several years). In spite of this assumption of policy elites power, little research has examined the impact of the policy agenda on the media agenda (Rogers & Dearing, 1988, p. 583).

A Typology

These variations in both media and source power may be more easily seen in a typology that combines levels of media and source power. The resulting intersections of these two power dimensions offer suggestive ways of considering source/media relations, as well as helping classify typical studies.

High power source/high power media. When powerful media encounter powerful sources, the result is often a symbiotic relationship, characterized by close mutual operation, serving explicit and direct benefits for each party not possible if they did not work closely. Both need the other, and take steps to ensure that the relationship will be mutually beneficial. Parenti (1978, p. 20) characterizes these mutually advantageous relations as "collusive" and contrasts them with "competitive" relations, which feature "asymmetric" exchange, "antagonistic rather than symbiotic." He notes that collusive, or symbiotic, relations are frequently a response to or an anticipation of competitive ones. The purpose of collusive relations may be to forestall emergence of competing interests. Of course, symbiotic relations also arise in lower power settings, but the stakes are higher otherwise and so the corresponding incentives to work out mutually agreeable terms.

When two equal powers collide, however, a competitive or adversary relationship may also result. When presidential candidate George Bush was interviewed by Dan Rather on CBS News, a well-prepared and prominent source met an equally well-prepared and determined reporter. The result was an aggressive exchange. [However, each recognized that he would be needing the other, in more symbiotic terms, during the remainder of the campaign. Ultimately, there is an adversarial challenging of sources but within a context of shared symbiotically important values.]

Few studies explicitly conceptualize co-equal media and sources. Some do, however, openly examine the interplay between the two (e.g., Miller, 1978), but more studies are needed on media elite and source interaction at the top levels. Linsky et al.'s (1986) examination of media impact on policy may fit here. Largely non-ideological analyses like his adopt an inside-the-beltway case study approach to the media as simply one elite balancing another. Media are assumed to be largely autonomous and powerful. However, the important role played by media in that study's cases (e.g., Agnew's resignation, the Neutron bomb, Love Canal) consisted primarily of connecting elites together, exposing what one elite was doing, or forcing them to come to grips with public and elite reaction.

High Power Source/Low Power Media. When a powerful source encounters a less powerful media organization, the result is often co-optation and manipulation. By purchasing their own satellite time, for example, presidential candidates are able to offer interviews with themselves to local television reporters. The candidate receives free air media coverage, with tame questioning from an often under-prepared local journalist (who nevertheless accepts the exchange to gain credibility by being seen talking with national figures). Similarly, President Reagan would on occasion meet privately with journalists from smaller papers around the country, bypassing the more adversarial Washington press corps. Sources constantly attempt to place media in a lower power position by denying access, claiming media bias, threatening reprisals, or a variety of other ways. Structurally, the radical perspectives predict this relationship, with the media having little independent power compared with sources from the economic and political elite.

Low Power Source/High Power Media. When a powerful media organization covers a less powerful source, a number of situations result. The media may marginalize a weak source, as The New York Times and CBS did the student radicals in the 1960s (Gitlin, 1980). A national medium, like USA Today, may choose to report innocuous life-style reports of average citizens. Ethical abuses may also be found in this context. Powerful media may intrude into the privacy of (low-power) individuals or damage their reputation, with little recourse for the citizen. (When CBS tackled General Westmoreland, it encountered a more powerful adversary, who nevertheless still failed to get satisfaction). The organizational approach (e.g., Altheide, 1976, Epstein, 1973) tends toward this view by perspective, while the more popular accounts of the press predict it by reputation (e.g., Halberstam, 1979).

Finally, the low power source/low power media category is the most difficult to find examples for, and contains the desiderata of study. The best example may be the alternative press--relatively low power media using mostly low power sources to do relatively inconsequential stories.

Levels of Analysis and Power Implications

These shifting power relationships can also be viewed across the same general levels of analysis discussed earlier. At each level, resources controlled by media and sources that they bring to their interaction vary, placing them in one of the four cells discussed above. Many indicators signify media power at each level. Reporter-source interactions are logically placed at the individual level, and structures joining organizations (like syndicated video services) are at a higher level. At the larger social system level, studies may analyze individuals, but as indicators of larger relationships. Studies of inter-locking directorates, for example, treat individual board members as proxies for the converging interests symbolized by their presence, and are logically place at a larger institutional level of analysis.

Individual Level. Few studies have focused explicitly on how individual sources deal with the press, other than highly specialized sources, as in Hess's (1984) analysis of Washington press officers. Journalists are the side of the individual power equation most often examined. If numbers are any measure of power, journalists have certainly increased their ranks, 61 percent by one account just during the 1970s, mostly in television and radio (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). Linsky (1986) notes that the Washington, D.C. press corp alone has tripled since World War II, to include 10,000 journalists and 3,000 media organizations. The growth of sources, however, has outstripped that of journalists in D.C.--the federal government information staff grew from 146 in FDR's first term to 3,000 in 1964, reaching 19,000 in 1976, a greater percentage rate growth than that of reporters.

Of these journalists, a handful have come under special scrutiny. Perhaps the most notorious critic of journalistic power was former vice-president Spiro Agnew (1969), who was among the first to focus serious attention on journalist power, noting the influence of a "small group of men, numbering perhaps no more than a dozen 'anchormen,' commentators and executive producers," adding that this group has a "free hand in selecting, presenting and interpreting the great issues of our nation." Others, particularly from the conservative side, have picked up this theme. Lichter, Lichter and Rothman (1986) claim that a new media elite has risen to take its place among the others, freestanding and accountable to no one. (Their argument that media power has gotten out of whack appear to rest on the rise of high-profile and high-salaried network news personalities.).

Having asserted this "power" they find that the voting patterns and social views of journalists at the elite media differ from both the public at large and a sample of business leaders. Conservative critiques such as these (see also Corry, 1986; Rusher, 1988) have no theory of power as such, however. Media power is presumed (largely by asserting autonomy and arrogance) and the differences between journalists and society at large are said to make that all the more disturbing. The implication is that media should be less powerful and not interfere with the natural workings of social institutions. The journalistic culture is perhaps more liberal than mainstream America--elite journalists are more liberal than journalists as a whole (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986)--but this may be a functional power posture for reporters, for whom a slightly left of center posture may help counter the predominantly conservative institutions they cover. This may empower them by making them less co-optable, and, therefore, may well improve their ability to produce content that the public can accept. Content that conformed totally to the status quo institutional view might be perceived by the public to be lacking in credibility.

In addition to studies of individual reporters' characteristics (e.g., Johnstone et al., Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986), others have examined the ways reporters interact with sources, particularly at the local level. Journalists are either passively reliant or collaborative with sources (Chibnall, 1975; Davison, 1974, 1975; Drew, 1972; Dunn, 1967; Gieber, 1960;). Others, like Miller's (1978) analysis of congressmen and reporters, show that interactions are characterized by symbiosis more often than by adversarity. Hess (1981) found that even the elite Washington Press Corps lacks institutional memory and a willingness to use documents, forcing reporters to rely on elite sources and each other.

One way to gauge the power of individual journalists in these interactions is by the extent to which they possess personal powerful attributes. These include income and education, certainly. Special expertise is obviously valuable as well from a reporter power perspective. The expertise of specialists like Dr. Timothy Johnson, of ABC News, should allow them to produce a better story on a medical issue than a general assignment reporter could. Although not inherently desirable traits, powerful individuals in American culture are more often than not older, white, professional, and male. How do journalists match these attributes? Clearly the general education level of journalists has risen since the Hutchins (1947) Commission called for better schooled reporters (but then the U.S. as a whole has become better educated since then). Of course, not everyone finds an increased status for journalists desirable. Moynihan (1975, p. 319) claims in 20 years the upper reaches of journalists in Washington grew from a group typical of other working Americans to become today an important social elite, a position he says makes them hostile to American society and government.[4]

Over the last 20 years though, salaries paid to journalists have not kept pace with the national average (or certainly with those important power centers journalists cover: lawyers, Fortune 500 executives, etc.). Journalists are becoming younger: News workers beyond 45 are dropping out in greater numbers, no longer able to accept the lower salaries (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986, p. 38). They are also becoming more female: 60 percent of journalism and mass communication students are now women (Weaver & Wilhoit, p. 38-39). Women have gained the most ground in broadcast news (particularly in what remains of radio news). These gains may indirectly represent changes in the profession's status. The "feminization" of newswork does not necessarily cause a reduction in the power position of the profession. But the influx of women into newswork, in addition to reflecting the legitimate removal of barriers, indicates that its economic status has declined relative to other jobs, causing males to seek higher status careers. (These concerns apply mainly to the local level. The top positions in national journalism remain attractive to both men and women).[5]

Another individual level indicator of power is the revolving door between journalism and public relations. A revolving door is common in fields enjoying a close symbiotic relationship (witness retired generals becoming consultants to defense contractors). To the extent that journalists bring media expertise to public relations, they help manipulate their former colleagues. The power asymmetry is seen in journalists changing careers for public relations jobs far more often than the reverse. Former journalists, who know the game and the players, are valuable to sources, whether at the national or local level. President George Bush's speech writer, Peggy Noonan, used to be a writer for CBS News. Knowing the desirability of the 10 second sound-bite, she exploited them in her writing for Bush. The New York Times' diplomatic correspondent (now editor), Leslie Gelb, worked for the State Department. Former NBC correspondent Bernard Kalb later worked at as State Department press spokesman. Even the patron saint of broadcast journalism, Edward R. Murrow, ended his career as head of the U.S. Information Agency.

Intra-organizational Level. At the intra-organizational level, our attention is drawn to how an organization's (or class of organizations) structure and routines make it more or less susceptible to source power. We may expect that sources may strive to satisfy certain organizational goals to avoid being disadvantaged by others. Collusive relations often supplant competitive ones. Some organizational studies are more explicit than others in recognizing the power implications of organizational structure. Fishman (1980, p. 154), for example, finds that the dependence of local reporters on the rhythms of local bureaucracies, lead them to legitimate the existing political system by disseminating "bureaucratic idealizations of the world and by filtering out troublesome perceptions of events." These "phase structures," according to Fishman, make journalists susceptible to the view of the world suitable to the bureaucracies themselves. Others, like Gans (1979), recognize that sources do the leading on many stories, but do not explore the power implications of this process. Gandy (1982) offers the parsimonious notion of information "subsidy" to describe how source organizations exert power over the news. He suggests that many activities carried out by public relations practitioners influence the media agenda by partially or wholly underwriting the cost of the information for the news organization. From this economic model it follows that the views of the economically powerful will have a better chance of being placed in the media.[6]

Organizational structure effects on power can be seen most clearly, perhaps, when comparing newspapers with television, which appears to lend itself more to manipulation than the print media. Many books have critiqued the shortcomings of television news (e.g., Epstein, 1973, Altheide, 1976). Compared to newspapers, broadcast journalism has several features that sources often exploit: the need for exciting visuals, desire to go "live," quicker deadlines, smaller staffs, more rapid turnover, and time constraints.

One way that organizations rationalize the news gathering process is by treating news as a commodity, that can be packaged, marketed, purchased, predicted, and controlled. Perhaps this tendency is only more obvious for television news (See, e.g., Bantz, et al., 1980) ("Give me 20 seconds on the governor"). Satellite technology makes it easier than ever for local stations to purchase news in packaged form. These packages range from automotive tips to political interviews. An ad in Broadcasting magazine for the Newsfeed Network, for example, features a news director saying, "They (Newsfeed) have a Washington Bureau to go after top national stories and they'll even get me a 'react' from my Congressman!" To be cost effective and marketable, packages like these have to be acceptable to many local station, with the inevitable pull toward the safe story (i.e., not discomfiting to powerful sources).

Public relations firms are among those exploiting commoditized news. KGTV-TV in San Diego was among 23 stations airing a two-minute video story, looking like a locally produced news report, on problems with generic drugs. Unknown to the audience, a brand-name drug manufacturer, Key Pharmaceuticals, paid for the report, which gave it favorable mention. The Food and Drug Administration later labelled the report misleading (Hinds, 1987). Similarly, in early 1985, viewers of the Cable News Network saw an exclusive interview with Morocco's King Hassan II conducted by Meryl Comer [a former news anchor at WTTG-TV in Washington, D.C., which also aired the story]. Viewers were not told that the story was an electronic press release, produced by leading Washington public relations firm, Gray and Co. Nor were they told that Comer, also a regular on two U.S. Chamber of Commerce-produced business programs, worked for Gray (Battiata, 1985). The professional news-like appearance of these free features makes them appealing to stations, but they create serious ethical and power questions, when control over content is turned over to self-interested sources.

Organization requirements demand new technologies, and these technologies in turn alter the organization and its power relations with others. Satellite technology, in particular, has seriously altered the power equation between networks and affiliates and between TV news and sources. Local stations can now send their reporters to high-profile national events, like political conventions, in greater numbers than ever before and beam back their stories. Government figures can project messages to local stations via satellite, by-passing network reporters altogether. Satellite feeds to local stations paid by political candidates maximize their control over the message. Stations in remote areas (read low-power) may justify it as a means of getting access to candidates.

Inter-organizational/Institutional/Industrial. This last category takes in a broad range of studies, including relations between organizations, and between those organizations and the larger elite and capitalistic formations in society. Institutional analyses of media concentrate on linking them to other power centers in society. Pluralist analyses have focused on issues like monopoly vs. competitive ownership in markets, cross and group ownership and the resulting effects on diversity (Picard & Winter, 1985). These comparative analyses, like McCombs (1987, 1988), have found little evidence that competition improves diversity. These studies do not typically link media to other power centers, and concentrate primarily on broad surface features of news, such as proportions of news devoted to various topics. Radical scholars assume that, competitive or not, media organizations are linked to other power centers in ways that further the status quo. From both a Marxist and elite perspective, the media are not seen as having much power independent of these other power centers. In either case, media are seen as instruments, inextricably tied to and used to further the interests of the powerful.

Murdock and Golding (1979) argue that a proper analysis of news production needs to focus on the economic context, as well as the class base, of control. Capitalism is said to have a generalized, abstracting drive to reduce everything to the equivalence of exchange value (Garnham, 1979, p. 133). This commodification of culture has important implications for power. Capital in the culture industry seeks out the most lucrative markets, with the most resources going to lucrative non-news information gathering. Dan Schiller (1986) is one who finds that in the changing structure of the news commodity, the trend is toward ever more sophisticated means of data gathering for large corporations, and ever less effective information transmission to the masses.

Garnham (1979, p. 145) notes that the present stage of industrialization of culture is characterized by a sharpening struggle to increase productivity. Many recent developments in the U.S. highlight this trend, including several recent high-profile buyouts of media firms by non-media corporations (CBS, NBC, etc.). Media firms become just another profit center, and conform more closely to the corporate culture of parent firms. The well-publicized layoffs at the network level and the erosion of the lines between the business and news departments in many newspapers and stations are also examples. Laying off employees and closing bureaus are the most obvious sign of power loss. Less apparent is that by integrating themselves into the larger corporate structure, media companies lose their independent power in dealings with other power centers in that same structure.

Earlier in this century, publishers like William Randolph Hearst, Norman Chandler and Henry Luce personified media power (e.g., Halberstam, 1979). Now this individual Luce-style power has been rationalized and corporatized to the point where, although media still have power, it is less personal and idiosyncratic, less buffered from the bottom-line, more impersonal and sensitive to the requirements of capital markets, which favor short-term high-yield performance. These new corporate values lead to new power-relations, but nevertheless remain consistent with ruling elite interests. Now, media are more tied to abstracted elite interests, more subtle in the absence of more overt publisher biases. Ultimately, a political economy approach leads us to expect that economically based media decisions will tend to favor those with economic power.

The other major radical approach to media power is termed by Mosco and Herman (1981) the instrumental approach, as opposed to the Marxist, structural view. These theorists follow the lead of C. Wright Mills in tracing the pervasive control exerted by the ruling class, or "power elite," on the social structure. In The Power Elite Mills (1956), proposed that the convergent interests of business, economic and military elites formed an apex at the top of the social structure. Class cohesion, assisted by connections and exchange of personnel between these sectors, strengthened and maintained this power elite. These interconnections are found by scrutinizing the ways the ruling class comes in contact with one another (prep schools, clubs, boards of directors, etc.) and influence policy (stock holding, policy groups, funding of institutes and think tanks, political action committees, etc.). Elite analysts like Domhoff (1967, 1970, 1979) typically do not give the media as much independent power. He says media have a complex role in the opinion shaping networks, and are merely one dissemination point among many for elite influence. At any rate, media are viewed as organically inseparable from elites, and, thus, far from autonomous. Obviously, conflicts among elites are played out through the press, but they are far more instrumental for elites than antagonistic or adversarial their interests.

Although this form of analysis has been applied less often to the media elite, many interconnections between media and other institutions present evidence of convergent interests and coordination. It indicates that, at best, the relationship is symbiotic. Dreier (1982), for example, examined the interlocks between media boards of directors and others, finding that the most prominent elite media companies (publishers of The New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post) were the most strongly interconnected with other power centers (elite universities, Fortune 500 corporations, etc.). This position of elite media firms in the inner circle of the capitalist structure leads them, according to Dreier, to adopt a corporate liberal philosophy. These media may adopt an adversarial tone on occasion (Pentagon papers, Watergate), but only as a corrective, non-parochial action, in the best long-term interests of preserving the capitalist system.

A similar approach could be taken with other media representatives. Top media leaders circulate with other elites. Elite reporters spend time at top think tanks (Hedrick Smith, 1988, wrote The Power Game, while at the conservative American Enterprise Institute.). Mid-career fellowships, like the Niemans at Harvard, allow top journalists to spend time at major universities, rubbing elbows and absorbing elite values. Top journalists, politicians, business leaders and academicians often appear on panels together, usually without any adversarial exchange taking place. These are all avenues for the media elite to circulate with other elites, developing first hand contacts, personal bonds and shared values. It may not necessarily happen, but the general pattern suggests a symbiotic relationship. Journalists retain their own power base, but within a context of shared symbiotic values.

Inter-organizational: Inter-media Power. Although relations between media and source organizations could be conceptualized, my major concern at this level is between media organizations. To the extent that one media organization is influential over others, it has proportionately greater power in relation to sources. As discussed earlier, by placing a story in The New York Times, a source can amplify the message many fold when it is picked up by other media. Media sociologists have known for a long time that newsworkers follow other media for help in guiding their own selections. Breed (1980, p. 195) described it as dendritic influence: "The influence goes 'down' from larger papers to smaller ones, as if the editor of the smaller paper is employing, in absentia, the editors of the larger paper to 'make up' his page for him." Timothy Crouse (1972) examined this "inter-media agenda setting" process acting face-to-face among political reporters covering the 1972 presidential campaign. Clearly the elite papers, with The New York Times being perhaps the final arbiter (Gans, 1979, p. 181), help set the agenda for the smaller ones.

Most attention has been focused on political pack journalism. Campaigns are highly structured, ritualized, covered in groups, and the change in the "story" is often ambiguous from one day to the next, leading journalists to rely on each other for help with interpretation. Other non-beat based issues also show this phenomenon, however. For the cocaine issue, referred to earlier, The New York Times was able to establish the drug issue early in 1986, followed by the newsmagazines and networks (Reese & Danielian, 1988). Why do news organizations duplicate one another's coverage? As Hess (1981) notes, papers like to have the prestige of having a reporter at the center of events. Nevertheless, they often receive multiple versions of the same event, creating competition among reporters, yet pressures to conform with the common shared wisdom. As Sigal (1973, p. 40) notes, "The consensible nature of news may even impede the breaking of stories that lack corroboration from opinion-leading newspapers. Once they do break, however, big stories will tend to remain in the news as first one news organization and then another uncovers additional information or a new interpretation."

Powerful sources can easily manipulate the pack, most visibly when reporters are herded about by campaign managers. Journalists may not like the system, but don't want to chance missing a story expected by the editor back home. Candidates may use a divide and conquer ploy, by speaking with a few influential journalists at a time in a symbiotically helpful interview. These influentials will report the exclusive or pass a pool report back to the others. Either way the rest follow their lead. Conversely, the pack may be empowered by its numbers. When the press is in a feeding frenzy, even powerful sources are obliged to respond to the press's agenda. Usually, sources are at the greatest disadvantage against a pack on the scent when factual material will be their undoing. Witness the Watergate Case, Iran-Contra, Dan Quayle's military record, John Tower's history of drinking. The press in full pursuit can be a powerful information gathering tool. It is often only a matter of time before someone digs up enough additional material to keep the story in play. Also, the press may have converged on a story, like the drug issue, to such a great extent that even powerful political leaders are obliged to take some action, before their public opinion support base is threatened.

Mainstream journalists do not duplicate each other entirely, of course. Particularly in recent years, the greater number of reporters covering campaigns generates pressure for papers to try to out-hustle the others, as reporters try to make names for themselves (The Miami Herald and the Gary Hart affair, for example). The relationship between news organizations may be symbiotic in-so-far as they help each other in cross-validating their work. There is safety in numbers. Media are adversarial to the extent that they can outdo one another in reporting some new fact or wrinkle, or in doing it faster than the others (the scoop). In this sense, many different organizations can produce content within a common consensual status quo framework, differentiating themselves from each other in minor ways. Even though there are more media outlets now than ever before (e.g., Compaine, 1985), inter-media agenda setting may reduce the diversity that would otherwise be expected. Strong centripetal forces act to standardize ever more diverse media. Following the lead of others lowers the cost by reducing risk. We may think of the national elite press as establishing an agenda to which other media add detail and color. The proliferation of political talk shows, news commentary programs, and other news channels adds to the total content, but often serves more to amplify this agenda than to change it in any structural way. Little research has examined this important issue of inter-media agenda setting.

A POWER BALANCE PERSPECTIVE

This paper has attempted to frame and review a large and diverse body of literature. Because setting the media agenda encompasses so many different theoretical and methodological perspectives, a power framework helps organize these many studies, and focus attention on the key centers of influence, the resources at their command, and the linkages between them. More often than not, the traditional democratic pluralist model has obscured these phenomena by assuming the prevailing power relations as a given, rather than treating them as an object of study. By acknowledging the fact of power, we can address the means by which it is exercised in media society relationships.

At present I have sketched a fairly crude picture of media and sources, making few distinctions between different types of media and their agendas. Clearly the media agenda is not monolithic and varies from one medium to another, although here I have been more interested in similarities than differences. More attention is needed to the different news media, including the specialized, prestige and popular press, and their relationships with each other and their sources. What is the influence of one medium over another? How do they differ in their relationships with sources, with what consequences for content? What are the changing roles of national and local media? Power balances are changing, for example, as local television news carries more national coverage, a traditional function of network news. New communication technologies are also changing the power equation as they fundamentally alter the ways news is distributed.

By thinking about power relationships, I have directed attention to the interfaces between news and source organizations, giving importance to the eco-system formed by these two intersecting systems. Whether media or sources have the greater power and where the desirable balance lies depends on one's perspective and theory of society. The performance of the press is often apt to disappoint all sides just as much. Conservatives complain that the media are constantly at odds with our social institutions and national values. Clearly, the media adopt, or at least profess, an adversarial posture in many of their dealings with the power structure, although radical theorists would argue that media are still firmly within the establishment status quo camp. The media may be liberal but not radical in the sense that they do not question basic societal structure and values. I would argue that some independent non-symbiotic power of media is necessary for them to carry out an aggressive adversarial surveillance function in society and report a picture of reality acceptable to an audience. To the extent that media do have power, it appears to be eroding in significant ways. By conceptualizing diverse indicators, like organizational structure and technological developments, in power terms, we can begin to grasp and the implications of such changes for the ultimate power equation. Furthermore, many potential measures of these relations are indicated. By thinking about power as a series of changing relationships, we also avoid the tendency to think of one institution as inherently and statically powerful. Instead of asserting that media are manipulated by the powerful, we can begin to examine those conditions under which media are able to assert their own power and agenda, independent of other power centers, and lay the groundwork for more fruitful empirical research.

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NOTES

1. No single descriptive term has been accepted for this area of research. Closest, perhaps, is "media sociology," which Davison, Boyland and Yu (1982, p. 77) note "seeks to explain why the content of mass communications is as it is." To avoid undue confusion, "media agenda setting" is used for now, although, like all metaphors, it distorts while clarifying the phenomena to be described. "Agenda-setting" implies a mechanistic, one-directional, linear influence process that tends to place the media in a passive receiver mode. This paradigm may be less applicable to those phenomenological studies treating media as active constructors of reality (e.g., Molotch & Lester, 1974), or to those viewing media as inseparable appendages of the power elite.

2. Many definitions emphasize the coercive side of power. Max Weber, one of the original social analysts of power, defined it as realizing one's will in a communal action, even against resistance of others (e.g., Weber, 1958, p. 180). Dahl (1961) has a similar definition: A has power over B to the extent that A can get B to do something that B wouldn't otherwise do. Parenti (1978, p. 20) emphasizes that, while some power relations are competitive, zero-sum games (one wins, one loses), many take the form of an exchange. These exchanges do not require that A coerce B, but rather focus attention on whose interests are best served by the relationship. B may have little choice in the exchange if A commands unique resources.

3. Even the prototypical individual-level study acknowledged that organizational pressures entered partially into "Mr. Gates'" decisions: The editor said he preferred stories slanted to conform to his paper's editorial policy (p. 390), and White (1950, p. 389) questioned whether his Mr. Gates could refuse to play up stories if his competition was doing likewise.

4. It's unclear how membership in a social elite group would make journalists hostile to American values. On the contrary, it should link journalists even more strongly to the power elite. Shared elite schooling provides important links between top journalists and other members of the power structure. A recent survey of 20 top young business journalists, for example, found all but five attended Ivy League schools (the others were not much less prestigious: Duke, Northwestern, New York University, Trinity, and Williams) ("Meet Tomorrow's Editors," 1988). Journalism school graduates are more likely to populate the ranks below the apex of the profession.

5. Perhaps the argument can better be put thusly: In a patriarchal society, the female work force has traditionally been ghettoized in low status, low wage occupations (waitressing, clerks, data entry operators). Even when women perform comparable work to men they are often paid less. Conceiving gender as an indicator of power, logically leads to the conclusion that advances by women into an occupation represent a pyrrhic victory, to the extent that males have allowed it by gravitating to more advantageous positions. The changing role of women in the mass media is an important but complicated subject that deserves more attention than I am able to give it here.

6. Of course, news organizations do not always passively acquiesce to being manipulated by sources. In the 1988 campaign, for example, a Doonesbury cartoon by Gary Trudeau pictured a Bush campaign "handler" calling a network television producer, telling him what the campaign story for that day was going to be, the "sound bite" and the photo opportunity. Furthermore, he said the network had no choice but to cover the event. Perhaps this unflattering portrait stung ABC, because shortly afterwards came the second presidential debate, at which ABC News made a decision not to interview influential campaign representatives,"spin doctors," whose job it was to put a favorable cast on the candidates performance. In addition, "Nightline" with Ted Koppel, offered a forum for the two candidates to debate. Furthermore, the time was to be offered to one candidate if the other did not show up, thus, preventing one candidate from vetoing coverage of the other.

News Coverage of Candidate Morality:

Who Uses It and Why?

by

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News Coverage of Candidate Morality: Who Uses It and Why?

During the 1988 presidential election campaign journalists frequently found themselves disagreeing among themselves and with many of their readers about how much coverage and what kind to devote to news coverage of moral lapses by candidates for high office.[1]

While Americans generally cherish the right to privacy, the law of privacy gives the media great latitude to define newsworthiness, particularly when public officials and public figures are the subject of the news. Thus, as a legal matter, journalists can usually report even the most minute details of a candidate's private life, but law cannot address the question of whether such information should be publicized.[2] And knowledge of and determination to follow ethical guidelines produce mixed results. Some ethical frameworks argue strongly for reporting all information; others require withholding information, at least in some circumstances.[3]

Similarly, public opinion is an uncertain guide. The 1985 ASNE newspaper credibility study, for example, reports 32 percent of respondents say newspapers invade people's privacy, 30 percent say they respect privacy. The remainder are neutral.[4] That data may indicate "the spirit of trust between the journalist and the public is eroded seriously by the public's perception that the media wantonly invade privacy in search of titillating stories that 'sell newspapers,'"[5] but the same data may also mean two-thirds of the respondents see no serious problem and may even find such coverage appropriate and useful.

Public opinion research consistently indicates that many people believe news media take advantage of people and invade their privacy, sensationalize stories and overemphasize bad news, but the same surveys also show that equal proportions believe the media are patriotic, approve of investigative reporting and support the press's watchdog role.[6] While these studies report a positive correlation between the perception that the media are sensationalistic, biased and unfair and a lack of trust in the media,[7] surveys also show that a negative perception of bias does not translate into less readership or satisfaction and, in fact, may even lead to greater satisfaction with newspapers, particularly in smaller market areas.[8]

Public opinion polls about specific instances of news reporting during the 1988 presidential campaign present equally mixed findings. Thus, a New York Times/CBS poll conducted in the aftermath of Gary Hart's withdrawal from the presidential race showed that nearly three-fifths of those polled said The Miami Herald, which first reported Donna Rice's visit to Hart's town house, was "unfairly probing into a candidate's private life" by conducting surveillance at his residence, but slightly more than one-third said information that a candidate had been unfaithful to his wife would cause them to vote against the candidate even if they agreed with his position on most issues.[9]

While the 40 percent of respondents who said it is important for the press to tell the American people if a candidate is unfaithful was far below the 72 percent who said the press should report if a candidate falsified his military record, those opinions apparently did not translate into approval of media investigations of vice-presidential candidate Dan Quayle. A Gallup poll conducted in late August 1988 for the Times Mirror Company reported 69 percent of the respondents said there had been "too much" coverage of circumstances surrounding his National Guard service that also included uncorroborated allegations that he had propositioned a female lobbyist while on a 1980 golf outing. More than half the respondents said the coverage had been unfair while only 37 percent said Quayle had been treated fairly by the media.[10]

Taken together, the surveys suggest that some people disapprove of media coverage of moral lapses by candidates, but others approve of and seem to want such coverage. However, very little attention has been devoted to determining who uses news about candidate morality or about why they might want such information.

Credibility studies reporting that political moderates,[11] women, older persons and those with lower socioeconomic status as measured by income, education and occupation[12] are most inclined to trust the media suggest but do not explore the possibility that those groups are most inclined to approve of media coverage of candidate morality and find such information useful in making voting decisions. At the same time, studies of voter response to negative political advertising indicating that such ads have a boomerang effect on older persons, the more highly educated and most involved politically[13] suggest these groups, if they pay attention to it, may be most influenced by similarly negative news coverage.

Although surveys suggest stories about candidate morality affect both perceptions of newspaper credibility and voting decision, only one study of political information processing includes use of information about candidates' moral values as a variable. While that 1988 study found use of the media to compare candidate morality is related to media use for other evaluative purposes,[14] it did not provide any demographic data on those who make such use of the media. Nor did it explore the possibility that using the media to compare candidates' morality may be more strongly related to entertainment and gossip motives as critics of such coverage contend.

Therefore, in an attempt to shed additional light on the questions raised by media attention to moral lapses by candidates for high office, this study uses 1988 survey data to determine the demographic characteristics and newspaper readership patterns of those who report using the media to compare candidates' morality and to explore the relationship between such use and other possible motives.

Methodology

This study is based on a secondary analysis of data collected in telephone interviews during the last two weeks of October 1988 with persons 18 and older in Fort Collins, Colorado. Completed interviews were obtained from 407 respondents representing approximately 70 percent of the households contacted.

Although the systematic random sample was drawn from a list of households subscribing to the local cable television service in order to assess subscriber interest in a local cable newscast, respondents were quite representative of the community as a whole because approximately four-fifths of the households in Fort Collins have cable television. Demographic characteristics of respondents closely match

1980 Fort Collins census data.

Questions in the survey were designed to determine media use, demographic characteristics, political and religious ideology and activity, political interest, and motives for political information gathering and for general media use.

Variables:

Candidate Morality: Use of media coverage of news about candidate morality was assessed by asking subjects to respond to the single statement, "When I use the media, I compare the moral values of the candidates," using a five-point scale with options ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

Demographics: Standard measures were used to determine respondents' sex, marital status, age, education and income.

Newspaper Use: Respondents were asked whether they use newspapers "a lot," "some," "not much" or "not at all" for national news, to name the newspaper they read most regularly and to tell whether during a typical week they read that newspaper "almost every day," "several times a week," or "only occasionally." Newspapers mentioned were categorized as local (the Fort Collins Coloradoan and other papers published in Larimer County), state (The Denver Post and Rocky Mountain News) or national (The New York Times, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, and other newspapers published outside Colorado).

In addition, respondents were asked whether they pay "close," "some," "a little" or "no" attention to stories about the "current presidential campaign that they happen to see in the mass media" and whether they put in "a lot," "some," "a little" or "no" effort in getting such information from the mass media.

Politics: General ideology was measured by asking respondents whether they consider themselves a "strong conservative," "conservative," middle of the road," "liberal" or "strong liberal," while political ideology was determined by asking whether they consider themselves a Republican, a Democrat, a member of some other political party, or an independent.

Political interest and activity were determined by asking whether respondents are "very," "somewhat," "not very" or "not at all" interested in the presidential election campaign and active in political organizations.

Religion: Religious activity was measured by a single question asking respondents whether they are "very," "somewhat," "not very" or "not at all" active in religious organizations. Ideology was determined by an open-ended follow-up question with probes.

Those who indicated some activity were asked, "Which religion would that be?" while those who indicated no activity were asked if they identify with a particular religion. Those refusing to answer were eliminated as were four Moslem respondents, all of whom were foreign students not eligible to vote in the presidential election.

Using previously published studies of religion as a guide,[15] the remaining 298 responses were collapsed into five categories arranged from religiously most conservative to most liberal: (1) conservative (Pentecostal, fundamentalist and evangelical denominations including most Baptists); (2) moderate (Lutheran, American Baptist, Latter-day

Saint, Roman Catholic); (3) mainline (mainline Protestant denominations and Judaism); (4) cultural Christians (responses of "Christian" or "Protestant" with no further identification); and (5) unaffiliated (Pagan, atheist, agnostic and others who specifically said they do not identify with any religion).

Motives: Political motives were assessed by responses on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" to "statements people make about news media use during a presidential election campaign." Agreement with the statements, "I use the media to see how candidates stand on the issues," and "I use the media to decide whom to vote for" were considered information-oriented motives. Agreement with the statements, "I use the media to get into the excitement of an election race," and "I use the media to have something to talk about with friends" were considered entertainment/gossip motives.

As a less campaign-specific check, general motives were assessed by questions asking respondents whether "reasons why some people use the mass media" are "very," "somewhat," "not very" or "not at all" important to them. "To keep tabs on what is going on" and "to make political decisions" were considered information-oriented motives; "to be entertained" and "to have things to talk about" were considered entertainment/gossip motives.

Findings

Among all respondents to this survey, slightly more than half reported using the mass media to compare candidates' moral values. Just under one third said they do not use the media that way; 16

percent were neutral. About 10 percent strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality; six percent strongly disagreed.

Demographics: Contrary to the implications from media credibility studies, there was no relationship between sex and use of the media to compare candidates' moral values. Although women were nearly twice as likely as men to agree strongly, they were also somewhat more likely than men to disagree strongly that they use the media for information about candidate morality. (Table 1)

However, consistent with The New York Times/CBS poll, single persons were significantly less likely than those who are or have been married to agree they use the media to compare candidates' moral values. About 10 percent of the married respondents, 15 percent of those who were separated or divorced and nearly one-third of those who were widowed strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality, but fewer than five percent of those who had never been married reported similarly strong agreement. Although the separated and divorced respondents reported surprisingly strong agreement, they also were more likely than the other groups to report strong disagreement. (Table 1)

As expected, older persons and those with less education and lower income were most inclined to agree they use the media to compare candidate morality. About one-fifth of those over age 55 strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality, but less than 10 percent of those under age 45 strongly agreed. Although only two-fifths of those with a community college or vocational school education strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality, more than half of those with less than a college education but less than half of those with at least a bachelors degree reported strong agreement. (Table 1)

Similarly, there was a significant negative correlation between income and this use of the media. Although the one-eighth of all respondents making more than $75,000 who reported strongly agreeing that they use the mass media to compare candidate morality was surprisingly high, that group also reported the strongest disagreement. Whereas one-eighth of those making over $75,000 strongly disagreed that they use the media to compare candidate morality, only about six percent of those making between $25,000 and $75,000 and about four percent of those making less than $25,000 reported similarly strong disagreement. (Table 1)

Newspaper Use: Relationships between choice of a regular newspaper, frequency of reading that paper and use of media to compare candidate morality were virtually non-existant. Regardless of whether respondents said they read the local paper, one of the larger newspapers from the state capital, or a nationally circulating newspaper, or whether they read that newspaper occasionally or almost every day, about half agreed they use the media to compare the moral values of candidates. About one-third disagreed. (Table 2)

While the absence of a relationship between this use and the choice of a regular newspaper may mean interest in using the media for information about candidate morality exists and is relatively strong regardless of how a newspaper covers such news, the relatively strong interest among both regular and casual readers probably does not mean interest in this kind of news is equally casual. More than half the respondents to this survey named a local newspaper as their regular newspaper, but the local newspapers they named have a relatively small news hole and devote far more attention to local news than to national news.

Indeed, the significant positive correlations between use of the media to compare candidate morality and newspaper use for national news, attention to campaign news and effort getting such news suggest that many persons who consider their local newspaper their regular one are willing to go out of their way to find the kind of political news they want.

Slightly over half of those who reported using newspapers a lot for national news agreed or strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality. Conversely, almost half of those who reported no use for national news either disagreed or strongly disagreed they use the media to compare candidate morality. Similarly, about 17 percent of those who reported paying close attention to campaign coverage and expending a lot of effort getting that news strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality, but only about one-third as many of those who pay less attention or expend less effort strongly agreed. (Table 2)

Politics: As those findings suggest, people who are interested in politics are more likely than those who are uninterested to use the media to compare candidates' morality. Whereas more than half of those who were very interested in politics agreed or strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidates' moral values, almost two-thirds of those who were uninterested disagreed. (Table 3)

However, there is no relationship between political activity and that kind of use of mass media. The politically very active were somewhat less likely to report using the media to compare candidates' morality and somewhat more likely to disagree, perhaps because they have alternate sources of such information. Whereas more than half of those who were relatively inactive in political organizations agreed or strongly agreed, only about two-fifths of the somewhat or very active respondents agreed or strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidates' moral values. (Table 3)

Although other studies suggested political moderates would be most attracted to this kind of news, that was not true among respondents to this survey. Strong conservatives were nearly twice as likely as other groups to disagree strongly that they use the media to compare candidates' moral values, but they were nearly four times as likely as others to agree strongly. Differences in this use between those who described themselves as "middle of the road" and those who called themselves "liberal" were almost non-existant. Similarly, Republicans and Democrats were about equally likely to report agreement or disagreement with this use of the media. The approximately 11 percent of each group who strongly agreed was higher than was found among Independents. (Table 3)

Religion: Although political activity made no difference while general and political ideology made some difference in use of mass media to compare candidates' moral values, the reverse was true for religion. There was a significant, weak positive correlation between religious activity and this use. However, the relationship between religious conservatism and use of the media to compare candidate morality was virtually non-existant.

Slightly fewer than half of those who reported no religious activity, slightly more than half of those reporting a little or some activity and almost two-thirds of those describing themselves as very active agreed or strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidates' morality. The most agreement and least disagreement with this use of the media was found among the Cultural Christians. Two-thirds of this group agreed or strongly agreed and only one-fifth disagreed or strongly disagreed that they use the media to compare candidates' moral values. In contrast, fewer than half of the Unaffiliated and of the Moderates agreed or strongly agreed and more than one-third disagreed or strongly disagreed. (Table 4)

Motives: Of the political motives considered in this study, the correlation between use of the media to compare candidates' moral values and use to decide for whom to vote was strongest. Although the correlations between use for candidate morality and the other motives were also significant and positive, the correlations for the information-oriented motives were stronger than those for the entertainment/gossip motives.

Among those who strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidates' moral values, slightly more than one-third strongly agreed and about two-fifths agreed they use the media to decide for whom to vote. Among those who strongly disagreed, only about one-third agreed or strongly agreed they use the media to decide for whom to vote. Similarly, more than four-fifths of those who strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality either agreed or strongly agreed they use the media to find out where candidates stand on the issues. Among those who strongly disagreed, about two-thirds use the media to learn candidates' issue positions. (Table 5)

Of those who strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality, two-thirds agreed or strongly agreed they use the media during election campaigns to have something to talk about; slightly more than two-fifths agreed or strongly agreed they use the media to get into the excitement of the campaign. However, about one-third disagreed or strongly disagreed they use the media for these entertainment/gossip reasons. (Table 5)

Although the relationships between use of the media to find out about candidates' moral values and both information and entertainment/gossip motives are positive and significant in the context of a political campaign, the strength of the correlations suggests use for comparing candidate morality is primarily an information-oriented motive. That impression is strengthened by the fact correlations between use for comparing morality and the general information-oriented motives are significant and positive while those with the entertainment/gossip motives are negative and insignificant.

When general motives were considered, again the strongest correlation was between use of media to compare candidate morality and use for political decision-making. Among those who strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality, three-fourths said the media are either somewhat or very important to them for making political decisions. Among those who disagreed, slightly over half said the media are somewhat or very important to them for making political decisions while just under half attached less importance to the media for political decision making. Similarly, four-fifths of those who strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality said the media are very important to them for keeping tabs on what is going on; almost two-thirds of those who agreed or were neutral, but only about half of those who strongly disagreed attached similar heavy importance to the media for keeping tabs. (Table 6)

In contrast to those information-oriented motives, persons who strongly agreed they use the media to compare candidate morality were less likely than others to attach heavy importance to the media for being entertained and for having things to talk about. Among those who strongly agreed, slightly more than two-fifths said the media are somewhat or very important for entertainment and about one-third said they are somewhat or very important for having things to talk about. Among those who strongly disagreed, almost two-thirds said the media are similarly important to them for entertainment and almost half said so for having things to talk about. (Table 6)

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate more than half the general population may use mass media to compare the moral values of presidential candidates. Those most likely to use the media for that purpose are older, married or formerly married, and have relatively low socioeconomic status as measured by education and income. Although they are generally conservative and active in religious organizations, use of the media to compare candidate morality is only tenuously related to party affiliation or religious conservatism.

Use of the media to compare candidate morality appears unrelated to preference for a local, state or national newspaper and to frequency of reading that paper. Those who use the media to compare candidate morality are inclined to use newspapers for national public affairs news, attentive to campaign news stories, expend effort getting that news, and generally interested in politics though not politically active.

Among those who strongly agree they use the media to compare the moral values of candidates, at least three-fourths say the media are at least somewhat important to them for making political decisions and agree or strongly agree they use the media to help them decide for whom to vote. Only about two-thirds say they use the media during a presidential campaign in order to find things to talk about; fewer than two-fifths say the media are generally important to them for having things to talk about or for entertainment.

Findings in this study may not be typical because data were gathered in a conservative, Republican town in the home state of Gary Hart, who was forced to withdraw from the 1988 presidential race following heavy media coverage of his relationship with Donna Rice. Therefore, the work needs to be replicated both in other communities and with a national sample. Future studies should also include measures that would allow specific attention to various styles of coverage of different moral issues.

However, the data suggest use of the media to compare candidates' moral values is quite common and exists independently of news coverage as part of a serious attempt to gather information and make informed political decisions. While entertainment/gossip motives exist for using the media to compare candidate morality, information-oriented motives appear stronger.

Because the strongest positive correlations were between use for comparing candidate morality and use for deciding whom to vote for and use and importance of the media for making political decisions, newspaper editors should think carefully before deciding not to provide coverage of candidates' moral lapses. At the same time, they need to think carefully about how they will cover such news.

Coverage may well offend those who do not use the media to compare candidates' moral values; some kinds of coverage may also offend those who do. Coverage almost certainly will have some effect on the election. So will withholding such information.

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Table 1

Demographic Characteristics and Use of News about Candidate Morality

	Compare Moral Values				
Demographic Variable	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strong Agree
Sex					
Male (n=174)	4.6	28.7	13.8	46.0	6.9
Female (n=220)	6.8	20.9	16.8	43.2	12.3
Cramer's V = .13, p = n.s.					
Marital Status					
Single (n=91)	3.3	24.2	15.4	52.7	4.4
Sep./Divorced (n=33)	9.1	27.3	18.2	30.3	15.2
Widowed (n=13)	----	----	----	69.2	30.8
Married (n=255)	6.3	25.9	16.9	41.2	9.8
Cramer's V = .14, p < .05					
Age					
18-25 (n=71)	2.8	21.1	14.1	57.7	4.2
26-35 (n=112)	7.1	27.7	20.5	36.6	8.0
36-45 (n=102)	8.8	26.5	15.7	41.2	7.8
46-55 (n=48)	6.3	29.2	10.4	41.7	12.5
56-65 (n=41)	----	24.4	17.1	41.5	17.1
66 (n=29)	3.4	6.9	13.8	55.2	20.7
Kendall's Tau C = .06, p < .1					
Education					
High School (n=10)	10.0	10.0	----	80.0	----
High School (n=55)	7.3	18.2	10.9	49.1	14.5
Com. Col./Voc. (n=28)	7.1	32.1	21.4	32.1	7.1
Some College (n=117)	5.1	20.5	16.2	47.0	11.1
College (n=85)	3.5	32.9	17.6	36.5	9.4
Some Grad. Sch. (n=37)	5.4	32.4	13.5	45.9	2.7
Adv. Degree (n=61)	6.6	23.0	19.7	41.0	9.8
Kendall's Tau C = -.06, p .1					
Income					
$10,000 (n=53)	3.8	20.8	13.2	52.8	9.4
$10,000-$25,000 (n=79)	3.8	26.6	10.1	44.3	15.1
$25,000-$50,000 (n=144)	6.9	23.6	20.8	39.6	9.0
$50,000-$75,000 (n=60)	5.0	30.0	21.7	40.0	3.3
$75,000 (n=32)	12.5	21.9	12.5	40.6	12.5
Kendall's Tau B = -.09, p < .05					

Table 2

Media Use and Use of News about Candidate Morality

		Compare Moral Values			
Media Use Variable	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strong Agree
Regular Newspaper					
Local (n=225)	5.3	19.6	17.3	46.7	11.1
State (n=135)	5.9	33.3	13.3	40.7	6.7
National (n=27)	7.4	29.6	14.8	37.0	11.1
Cramer's V = .12, p = n.s.					
Newspaper Reading					
Occasionally (n=63)	7.9	20.6	14.3	47.6	9.5
Sev. Times Week (n=89)	2.2	31.5	19.1	42.7	4.5
Daily (n=240)	6.3	23.3	15.4	43.8	11.3
Kendall's Tau C = .03, p = n.s.					
Use of Newspapers for National News					
None (n=18)	11.1	33.3	11.1	38.9	5.6
Not Much (n=44)	9.1	27.3	11.4	40.9	11.4
Some (n=139)	5.8	24.5	17.3	48.2	4.3
A Lot (n=198)	4.5	23.7	16.2	42.4	13.1
Kendall's Tau C = .06, p = .05					
Attention to Campaign News					
None (n=14)	----	64.3	7.1	28.6	----
Not Much (n=58)	8.6	37.9	10.3	39.7	3.4
Some (n=163)	7.4	23.3	19.6	44.2	5.5
Close (n=167)	3.6	18.0	15.6	46.1	16.8
Kendall's Tau C = .18, p < .001					
Effort Getting Campaign News					
None (n=30)	6.7	40.0	10.0	40.0	3.3
A Little (n=73)	8.2	28.8	16.4	41.1	5.5
Some (n=190)	5.3	25.3	16.3	45.3	7.9
A Lot (n=109)	4.6	16.5	17.4	45.0	16.5
Kendall's Tau C = .13, p < .001					

Table 3

Politics and Use of News about Candidate Morality

	Compare Moral Values				
Political Variable	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strong Agree
Political Interest					
Not at All (n=11)	----	63.6	9.1	27.3	----
Not Very (n=32)	15.6	25.0	15.6	43.8	----
Somewhat (n=114)	7.0	26.3	20.2	43.0	3.5
Very (n=246)	4.1	22.0	14.6	45.1	14.2
Kendall's Tau C = .14, $p < .001$					
Political Activity					
Not at All (n=276)	5.8	26.4	13.8	44.9	9.1
Not Very (n=53)	3.8	13.2	22.6	47.2	13.2
Somewhat (n=40)	10.0	25.0	20.0	37.5	7.5
Very (n=13)	----	46.2	15.4	30.8	7.7
Kendall's Tau C = -.01, p = n.s.					
General Ideology					
Strong Conserv. (n=19)	10.5	21.1	15.8	31.6	31.6
Conservative (n=120)	5.0	20.0	12.5	54.2	8.3
Middle of Road (n=150)	6.7	25.3	18.0	42.0	8.0
Liberal (n=72)	4.2	30.6	18.1	38.9	8.3
Strong Liberal (n=22)	4.5	31.8	13.6	40.9	9.1
Kendall's Tau B = -.08, $p < .05$					
Party Affiliation					
Republican (n=129)	2.3	25.6	16.3	44.2	11.6
Democrat (n=90)	4.4	24.4	18.9	41.1	11.1
Another Party (n=6)	33.3	50.0	----	16.7	----
Independent (n=159)	8.2	23.3	14.5	47.2	6.9
Cramer's V = .13, $p < .1$					

Table 4

Religion and Use of News about Candidate Morality

	Compare Moral Values				
Religion Variable	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strong Agree
Religious Activity					
Not at All (n=183)	4.9	32.8	14.8	39.9	7.7
Not Very (n=39)	2.6	20.5	23.1	46.2	7.7
Somewhat (n=94)	9.6	16.0	18.1	44.7	11.7
Very (n=73)	4.1	19.2	13.7	50.7	12.3
Kendall's Tau C = .10, p = .005					
Religion					
Conservative (n=37)	5.4	21.6	10.8	45.9	16.2
Moderate (n=89)	5.6	27.0	18.0	42.7	6.7
Mainline (n=58)	5.2	13.8	22.4	53.4	5.2
Cult. Christian (n=50)	4.0	16.0	14.0	48.0	18.0
Unaffiliated (n=46)	4.3	32.6	17.4	39.1	6.5
Kendall's Tau B = -.002, p = n.s.					

Table 5

Use of News about Candidate Morality and Other Motives for Political Media Use

	Compare Moral Values				
Motive Agreement	Strong Disagree (n=23)	Disagree (n=99)	Neither (n=65)	Agree (n=176)	Strong Agree (n=39)
Learn Issue Stands					
Strong Disagree	8.7	1.0	----	----	----
Disagree	8.7	21.2	1.5	11.4	2.6
Neither	17.4	10.1	12.3	5.1	5.1
Agree	43.5	61.6	75.4	68.8	38.5
Strong Agree	21.7	6.1	10.8	14.8	53.8
Kendall's Tau B = .24, p < .001					
Decide Whom To Vote For					
Strong Disagree	17.4	15.5	4.6	3.4	2.6
Disagree	39.1	41.2	18.5	21.6	12.8
Neither	13.0	12.4	30.8	10.2	7.7
Agree	26.1	25.8	36.9	56.3	41.0
Strong Agree	4.3	5.2	9.2	8.5	35.9
Kendall's Tau B = .31, p < .001					
Get Into Excitement Of Race					
Strong Disagree	34.8	8.1	6.2	8.0	10.3
Disagree	39.1	48.5	40.0	32.6	28.2
Neither	8.7	15.2	30.8	18.3	17.9
Agree	17.4	24.2	16.9	36.6	30.8
Strong Agree	----	4.0	6.2	4.6	12.8
Kendall's Tau B = .16, p < .001					
Have Something To Talk About					
Strong Disagree	39.1	4.0	6.2	6.3	7.7
Disagree	8.7	46.5	24.6	29.5	25.6
Neither	8.7	11.1	27.7	18.2	5.1
Agree	34.8	35.4	33.8	44.9	46.2
Strong Agree	8.7	3.0	7.7	1.1	15.4
Kendall's Tau B = .11, p = .005					

Table 6

Use of News about Candidate Morality and Other Motives for General Media Use

	Compare Moral Values				
Motive Importance	Strong Disagree (n=23)	Disagree (n=99)	Neither (n=63)	Agree (n=174)	Strong Agree (n=38)
Keep Tabs					
Not at All	----	2.0	----	----	----
Not Very	----	3.0	----	1.7	2.6
Somewhat	47.8	37.4	34.9	35.6	15.8
Very	52.2	57.6	65.1	62.6	81.6
Kendall's Tau C = .08, p = .01					
Make Political Decisions					
Not at All	22.7	12.1	4.8	6.3	7.9
Not Very	22.7	22.2	17.5	9.2	18.4
Somewhat	31.8	48.5	58.7	48.3	26.3
Very	22.7	17.2	19.0	36.2	47.4
Kendall's Tau C = .19, p < .001					
Be Entertained					
Not at All	31.8	21.2	14.3	20.1	42.1
Not Very	4.5	21.2	19.0	14.4	13.2
Somewhat	54.5	45.5	57.1	52.3	34.2
Very	9.1	12.1	9.5	13.2	10.5
Kendall's Tau C = -.02, p = n.s.					
Have Things To Talk About					
Not at All	31.8	19.2	6.3	14.4	21.1
Not Very	22.7	25.3	39.7	33.3	42.1
Somewhat	36.4	48.5	42.9	44.8	31.6
Very	9.1	7.1	11.1	7.5	5.3
Kendall's Tau B = -.03, p = n.s.					

Religion and Mass Media Use for Voting Decision during the 1988 Presidential Election Campaign

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Religion and Mass Media Use for Voting Decision during the 1988 Presidential Election Campaign

Recent attention to religion as a potent social and political force has focused on the New Christian Right with its overt, conservative political agenda although the best available evidence indicates that those sympathetic to this new religio-political movement make up no more than one-third, and probably only 15 to 20 percent, of the total population.[1] Although movement supporters are not demographically distinguishable from the population as a whole, core support comes from members of fundamentalist and evangelical churches which have always been politically and religiously conservative and most attractive to less educated, lower socioeconomic status individuals.[2]

Those demographic characteristics would not seem ideally suited for making the New Christian Right a potent voting block and, indeed, that may be the case. Some research suggests religion-based voting has not been as much of a factor in victories for conservative political candidates sympathetic to the political goals of the movement's leadership as the conventional wisdom suggests.[3] However, other studies show the movement is politically important because the charisma and organizational abilities of its clergy leaders in the areas of fund-raising, lobbying and publicity through the aegis of the electronic church translate into influence that transcends mere numbers of adherents.[4]

Although there are numerous studies of the New Christian Right and of the electronic church, very few explore the role of communication in religion-based political interest and behavior. Those that do focus on the electronic church and suggest it is most appealing to people whose religious and political views are already similar to the positions taken by the televangelists.[5] Because content analyses indicate the programming is becoming increasingly political,[6] viewers undoubtedly pick up some political information from the electronic church even though fewer than one-third have information-oriented motives for watching.[7] Therefore, attention to religious television has been shown to have some influence on political behavior.[8]

The same relationship may also hold true for general media use. As was found in studies of messages from the electronic church, content analyses of newspapers and television news reveal a similar overlap between religious and political news.[9] Those studies also indicate that the New Christian Right has been covered more heavily than other religions except for Roman Catholicism.

Although much of the coverage tends to delegitimize the Christian Right, and perhaps all religions,[10] Entman and Paletz contend this heavy emphasis on the activities and interests of the New Christian Right has an agenda-setting effect that may short-circuit political discussion and alienate more religiously liberal groups from both the media and the political process.[11]

But whether the nature of the coverage of religion and politics may make mass media differentially useful as a source of political information to persons with varying religious orientations has received relatively little attention. In fact, although studies of religion and political behavior and of mass media use during political campaigns abound, only one includes measures of both religion and media use.

That study based on survey data collected during the 1988 presidential election campaign suggests that religion does, indeed, play some role in mass media use for political information.[12] Consistent with previous research showing that those who are most tightly tied to their own religion are less-exposed to cross-pressures from communication with sources who might cast doubt on their beliefs,[13] mass media use for political information was greatest among those less active in religious organizations. Consistent with the demographic data on group members, inactive religious conservatives were more likely to use television for national public affairs news while inactive religious liberals were more inclined to use newspapers. Although the mass media devoted more attention to the political agenda of the conservative Christian right than to issues of concern to religious liberals, it was the religious liberals who were most interested in the presidential election campaign. Religious liberals, and particularly inactive liberals, also reported paying more attention to campaign news stories and expending more effort finding that news.

While those findings may simply be a consequence of the socioeconomic status of religious group members, the findings lend some support to Paletz and Entman's critique of the media's emphasis on the conservative religio-political agenda. Although the study was not designed to determine how or why the various religious groups were using the mass media, the finding that religious liberals were paying more attention to campaign news and expending more effort getting campaign news raises the possibility that they felt they had to be more attentive and work harder to find the information important to them because of the relative dearth of information available in the mass media about political issues other than those associated with religious conservatism.

Therefore, in an effort to shed additional light on the questions raised by those findings, this study uses 1988 survey data to address the question of whether the mass media are differentially useful during an election campaign to people of different religious orientations.

As suggested by the studies of the role of the electronic church in political behavior and by the studies of religion and communication cross-pressures, those most tightly tied to a religious organization may have greater access to religious information sources and feel less need for secular information sources. They may also consciously avoid secular sources. Therefore, people who are inactive in religious organizations should report more reliance on the mass media for making up their minds about whom to vote for than those who are more active in religious organizations.

At the same time, if the Paletz and Entman critique that media attention to the conservative agenda is dysfunctional for religious liberals is correct, religious liberals may not be finding the information they are looking for in the mass media. Therefore, they may place less reliance than conservatives on the mass media for making voting decisions even though previous research suggests they may be the most diligent users of mass media for campaign news.

While the survey used for this study did not include all the measures of media use or of religious and political attitudes and behavior one might like, it does provide measures satisfactory for an initial assessment of the relationship between religion and media use for political decision making.

Methodology

This study is based on a secondary analysis of data collected in telephone interviews during the last two weeks of October 1988 with persons 18 and older in Fort Collins, Colorado. Completed interviews were obtained from 407 respondents representing approximately 70 percent of the households contacted.

Although the systematic random sample was drawn from a list of households subscribing to the local cable television service, respondents were quite representative of the community as a whole because approximately four-fifths of the households in Fort Collins subscribe to cable television. Demographic characteristics of respondents closely matched census data.

Questions were designed to determine religion and religious activity, political ideology, political interest and activity, standard demographic characteristics and mass media use for political information during the 1988 presidential election campaign.

Variables:

Media Use for Voting Decision: The dependent variable in this study, mass media use for making voting decisions, was measured by asking respondents to use a five-point scale with categories ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree in reacting to the single statement, "I use the media to decide whom to vote for."

Religion. Religious activity was determined by a single question asking respondents whether they are "very," "somewhat," "not very" or "not at all" active in religious organizations.

Religion was determined by follow-up questions. Those who indicated some activity in religious organizations were asked, "Which religion would that be?" Those who indicated no activity were asked if they identify with a particular religion. Interviewers were instructed to probe until they were sure respondents had provided the most specific religious identification possible. This procedure produced nearly a hundred different responses ranging from refusals to answer the question to the names of specific congregations. Those who refused to answer were eliminated from this study as were four Moslem respondents, all of whom were foreign students not eligible to vote in the presidential election.

Because there were too few respondents from individual denominations to allow for a meaningful examination of denominational differences, previously published studies[14] of religion were used as a guide to place the 289 respondents who answered the religion question into five religious orientations arranged from religiously most conservative to most liberal: (1) Conservative (Pentecostal, Jehovahs Witness, Assembly of God, Church of Christ, Church of the Living G-d, Campus Crusade, some conservative non-denominational congregations, and all Baptists except those identifying themselves as American Baptist); (2) Moderate (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Salvation Army, American Baptist and Latter-day Saint); (3) Mainline (United Church of Christ, Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, Congregational, Friends, Unitarian, Unity and Judaism); (4) Cultural Christian (responses of "Christian" or "Protestant" with no further information following probes); (5) Unaffiliated (Pagan, agnostic, atheist and others who specifically said they do not identify with any religion).

Politics. General political ideology was determined by a single question asking respondents to characterize themselves as "strong conservative," "conservative," "middle of the road," "liberal," or "strong liberal." Political liberalism was assessed by asking respondents whether they consider themselves a Republican, an Independent or a Democrat. Republicans were assumed to be most conservative and Democrats least conservative.

Political interest and activity were measured by single questions asking whether respondents are "very," "somewhat," "not very," or "not at all" interested in the presidential election and active in political organizations.

Demographics. Standard measures were used to determine respondents' gender, age, highest level of education and household income.

Media Use. General media use was determined by two questions asking respondents whether they use television and newspapers "a lot," "some," "not much," or "not at all" for national public affairs news.

Diligence in political information gathering was measured by asking respondents if they pay "close," "some," "a little," or "no" attention to "stories about the current presidential election campaign" they "happen to come across," and whether they generally put in "a lot," "some," "a little," or "no" effort "getting information from the mass media about the current presidential campaign."

Data Analysis:

Data analysis consisted of cross tabulations, multivariate cross tabulations, and hierarchical regression. For the first hierarchical regression with media use for voting decision as the dependent variable, traditional demographic and political measures including campaign interest were entered in the first step. The religion measures were entered in step two to determine whether religion adds anything to the ability to explain variance beyond what can be explained by more common measures; media use variables were entered in the final steps. In the second hierarchical regression, the religion measures were added in the last step in order to explore more fully the relationship between the religion variables and other more commonly used predictors of media use for voting decision.

Findings

Crosstabulations of mass media use for voting decision with religious orientation and religious activity suggest religious conservatives and those inactive in religious organizations may rely more on the mass media than religious liberals and those more active in their religion. However, the correlations are extremely weak and not statistically significant with this size sample.

Although the Unaffiliated were more than twice as likely as the other groups to disagree strongly with the statement about using the media for making voting decisions, between one-half and three-fifths of all groups from the most conservative to the most liberal agreed or strongly agreed they use the media for making voting decisions. Similarly, regardless of level of activity in religious organization, about half of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed they use the mass media for making voting decisions. However, the not very active were more likely than others to disagree strongly and the very active were less likely to agree strongly they use the media for voting decisions. (Table 1)

Using religious orientation and religious activity simultaneously in multivariate crosstabulations lends some support to the general impression that religious conservatives and those inactive in religious organizations are most media reliant in their voting decisions.

Employing religious orientation as the control variable indicates that within each group, it is the less active who are most inclined to agree they use the media for making voting decisions although the findings are statistically significant with this size sample only for the Moderates. Within that group, about half of those who are not at all or not very active agreed or strongly agreed they use the media for voting decisions; no more than one-third disagreed and none disagreed strongly. However, among the somewhat and very active, slightly fewer than half agreed or strongly agreed; about the same proportion disagreed or strongly disagreed. (Table 2)

Similarly, regardless of level of religious activity, religious conservatives are more likely than religious liberals to say they use the mass media for making voting decisions although, again, the findings are statistically significant for only one group. Among the not very active, at least two-thirds of those classified as Conservative or Moderate agreed or strongly agreed; fewer than one-fifth disagreed. However, among the Unaffiliated, none strongly agreed they use the mass media for making voting decisions while one-third disagreed or strongly disagreed. (Table 3)

Although the crosstabulations may mean there is virtually no relationship between use of mass media for making voting decisions and religious orientation or religious activity, regression analysis suggests the two religion measures are at least as useful for predicting this use of mass media as are the more commonly considered demographic, political and media use variables.

Collectively the fourteen variables considered in this portion of the study explained less than five percent of the variance in media use for making voting decisions, but regardless of whether the two religion measures were entered in step two (Table 4) or in step four (Table 5), they explained about half a percent of additional variance beyond that explained by previously considered measures.

When only the standard demographic and political variables are used, political interest is the strongest predictor of media use for making voting decisions. Being younger is the only other statistically significant predictor, but being politically active appears to be almost as predictive. (Table 4)

With the two religion measures entered in step two, political interest remains the best predictor, but religious inactivity replaces age, which is no longer statistically significant, as the second best predictor. Political activity becomes the only other statistically significant predictor of mass media use for making voting decisions. Religious conservatism appears to be marginally useful. However, when the media use variables are entered in steps three and four, the predictive ability of more traditional measures decreases steadily.

With all fourteen measures entered in the regression equation, political interest and activity lose their predictive power. Only religious conservatism remains as a statistically significant predictor of mass media use for voting decision although newsgathering effort and religious inactivity appear marginally useful ($p \leq .15$). (Table 4)

Entering the religion measures in the last step of the regression analysis suggests it is media use, not religion, which affects the predictive ability of the political interest and activity measures. When only newspaper and television use are added to the regression equation, neither appears as significant predictors of media use for making voting decisions and, in fact, their addition to the equation decreases the amount of variance that can be explained. However, with those measures included, the strength and significance of both political interest and political activity decrease although political interest remains the best predictor. Adding the diligence measures in step three increases the explained variance to what it was in step one, but their inclusion eliminates the predictive utility of political interest and political activity. In step three, expending more effort getting information about the presidential campaign becomes the best predictor of mass media use for making voting decisions; being younger is a slightly weaker but still significant predictor. Adding the religion variables in step four, however, eliminates age as a predictor and decreases newsgathering effort to marginal predictive utility leaving only religious conservatism as a statistically significant predictor of mass media use for making voting decisions. (Table 5)

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that knowledge of religious orientation and religious activity can contribute to an understanding of mass media use during a presidential election campaign. The available evidence indicates religious conservatives and those inactive in religious organizations are more likely than religious liberals and those more active in religious organizations to say they use information from the mass media for making voting decisions.

Although with the size sample and the measures available for this study, the correlations between use of mass media for making voting decisions and religious orientation and religious activity were extremely weak and, for the most part, were not statistically significant, including those measures in regression analyses indicate they help explain the variance in media use for making voting decisions. Religious conservatism is, in fact, a stronger predictor than any of the more commonly used demographic, political or media use measures. Religious inactivity and higher effort expended in getting information about the election campaign are marginally useful as predictors.

No measures were available in the survey used for this secondary analysis to indicate where religiously active persons are getting their political information, whether they are consciously shunning secular information sources such as the mass media or whether they simply have access to enough additional information sources that their reported reliance on any particular source such as mass media is decreased. However, the finding that those less active in religious organizations are more likely to agree they use the mass media for making voting decisions is consistent with previous research indicating that those who are most involved in their religion are less subject to cross-pressures from competing information sources.

The findings also tend to support Paletz and Entman's contention that heavy media attention to the conservative religio-political agenda at the expense of issues and concerns more salient to other groups may alienate persons with other orientations from both the political process and from the mass media. Although the only previous study to include measures of religion along with political and media use variables as well as other standard demographics indicated it was the religious liberals who were most interested in the 1988 presidential election campaign and the most diligent mass media users for campaign news, they do not appear to be finding what they want in the mass media. This study found religious conservatism, not religious liberalism, to be predictive of reported mass media use for making voting decisions. While the available measures did not permit determining for whom those religious conservatives intended to vote in the 1988 presidential election, the effect of including the media use measures in the regression equation suggests there is something in the way the mass media covered the presidential campaign that is affecting both political interest and political activity among those most attentive to media coverage.

The effect on the other potential predictors of adding religion to the regression equation suggests that Paletz and Entman may be correct in saying that, even though much media coverage may be critical of the political positions taken by the religious conservatives, the amount of attention devoted to those concerns may actually strengthen the religious right. Religiously inactive but politically active religious conservatives are the ones who appear to be finding the information they want and need in the mass media. They are the ones who seem to be using the mass media for making their voting decisions.

Although previous research seems to indicate that purely religion-based voting has been decreasing during this century, the results of this study suggest there may be an indirect effect that needs to be considered. There may be differences related to religious orientation and religious activity in the number and kind of information sources people have available and in the ways they evaluate the information in those sources and use them for making voting decisions. To determine whether that is true, this study needs to be replicated both with a national sample and with local samples from other communities. Because the 14 measures used for the regression analysis in this study explained very little variance in media use for voting decision, those studies should also include more precise measures of religious orientation and activity and political beliefs and behaviors. They should also take into account the availability and use of alternate information sources, respondents' evaluations of those sources, their information gathering motives and strategies for arriving at specific political decisions.

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Table 1

Religious Orientation, Religious Activity and Mass Media Use for Voting Decision in the 1988 Presidential Election

	Use Mass Media for Voting Decision				
Religion Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Religious Orientation					
Conservative (n=37)	10.8	48.6	18.9	16.2	5.4
Moderate (n=87)	12.6	35.6	12.6	34.5	4.6
Mainline (n=58)	8.6	46.6	20.7	17.2	6.9
Cultural (n=50)	12.0	38.0	10.0	34.0	6.0
Unaffiliated (n=45)	11.1	42.2	11.1	22.2	13.3
Kendall's Tau B = -.03, p = n.s.					
Religious Activity					
Not at All (n=182)	11.0	45.1	11.5	24.2	8.2
Not Very (n=38)	10.5	34.2	26.3	18.4	10.5
Somewhat (n=94)	12.8	39.4	13.8	27.7	6.4
Very (n=73)	6.8	41.1	15.1	31.5	5.5
Kendall's Tau C = -.04, p = n.s.					

Note: Some totals do not equal 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 2

Religious Activity and Media Use for Voting Decision Controlling for Religious Orientation

		Use for Voting Decision				
Rel. Orient.	Activity	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Conservative	None (n=4)	----	50.0	25.0	----	50.0
	Not Very (n=1)	----	100.0	----	----	----
	Somewhat (n=11)	18.2	45.5	27.3	9.1	----
	Very (n=21)	9.5	47.6	14.3	23.8	4.8
	Kendall's Tau C = -.04, p = n.s.					
Moderate	None (n=21)	23.8	33.3	9.5	33.3	----
	Not Very (n=6)	16.7	50.0	16.7	16.7	----
	Somewhat (n=37)	8.1	37.8	13.5	35.1	5.4
	Very (n=23)	8.7	30.4	13.0	39.1	8.7
	Kendall's Tau C = -.16, $p < .05$					
Mainline	None (n=14)	7.1	64.3	7.1	14.3	7.1
	Not Very (n=7)	14.3	14.3	42.9	14.3	14.3
	Somewhat (n=21)	14.3	47.6	14.3	19.0	4.8
	Very (n=16)	----	43.8	31.3	18.8	6.3
	Kendall's Tau C = -.08, p = n.s.					
Cultural	None (n=9)	11.1	44.4	11.1	33.3	----
	Not Very (n=9)	11.1	22.2	33.3	22.2	11.1
	Somewhat (n=19)	15.8	31.6	5.3	36.8	10.5
	Very (n=12)	8.3	50.0	----	41.7	----
	Kendall's Tau C = -.01, p = n.s.					
Unaffiliated	None (n=34)	14.7	47.1	5.9	20.6	11.8
	Not Very (n=6)	----	33.3	33.3	16.7	16.7
	Somewhat (n=2)	----	50.0	50.0	----	----
	Very (n=0)	----	----	----	----	----
	Kendall's Tau C = -.09, p = n.s.					

Note: Some totals do not equal 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 3

Religious Orientation and Media Use for Voting Decision Controlling for Religious Activity

		Use for Voting Decision				
Activity	Rel. Orient.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
None	Conserv. (n=4)	----	50.0	25.0	----	25.0
	Moderate (n=21)	23.8	33.3	9.5	33.3	----
	Mainline (n=14)	7.1	64.3	7.1	14.3	7.1
	Cultural (n=9)	11.1	44.4	11.1	33.3	----
	Unaffiliated(n=35)	14.7	47.1	5.9	20.6	11.8
	Kendall's Tau B = -.01, p = n.s.					
Not Very	Conserv. (n=1)	----	100.0	----	----	----
	Moderate (n=6)	16.7	50.0	16.7	16.7	----
	Mainline (n=7)	14.3	14.3	42.9	14.3	14.3
	Cultural (n=9)	11.1	22.2	33.3	22.2	11.1
	Unaffiliated(n=6)	----	33.3	33.3	16.7	16.7
	Kendall's Tau B = -.21, p < .1					
Somewhat	Conserv. (n=11)	18.2	45.5	27.3	9.1	----
	Moderate (n=37)	8.1	37.8	13.5	35.1	5.4
	Mainline (n=21)	14.3	47.6	14.3	19.0	4.8
	Cultural (n=19)	15.8	31.6	5.3	36.8	10.5
	Unaffiliated(n=2)	----	50.0	50.0	----	----
	Kendall's Tau B = -.04, p = n.s.					
Very	Conserv. (n=21)	9.5	47.6	14.3	23.8	4.8
	Moderate (n=23)	8.7	30.4	13.0	39.1	8.7
	Mainline (n=16)	----	43.8	31.3	18.8	6.3
	Cultural (n=12)	8.3	50.0	----	41.7	----
	Unaffiliated(n=0)	----	----	----	----	----
	Kendall's Tau B = -.03, p = n.s.					

Note: Some totals do not equal 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 4

Demographic, Political, Religious and Media Use Variables as Predictors of Mass Media Use for Voting Decision[a]

Predictor	Dem.& Pol.	+Rel.	+Med. Use	+Med. Dil.
Sex[b]	.08	.09	.08	.08
Age	-.11*	-.09	-.09	-.10
Education	-.07	-.07	-.07	-.08
Income	-.03	-.02	-.03	-.02
Gen. Liberalism	.04	.04	.04	.03
Pol. Lib. (Party ID)	.00	-.01	-.01	-.01
Pol. Interest	.15***	.17***	.17**	.03
Pol. Activity	.10	.12*	.12*	.10
Rel. Liberalism		-.11	-.12	-.12*
Rel. Activity		-.13*	-.12*	-.11
Newspaper Use			-.01	.04
Television Use			.06	-.01
Attention				.09
Effort				.12
Overall F	2.05	2.04	1.77	1.74
Significance	.04	.08	.05	.05
R^2	.064	.079	.083	.094
Adj. R^2	.033	.040	.036	.040

* $p \leq .1$
** $p \leq .05$
*** $p \leq .01$

[a] Entries are standardized regression coefficients.

[b] Dummy variable analysis was used for sex. A positive value is associated with being female; a negative value is associated with being male.

Table 5

Demographic, Political, Media Use and Religion Variables as Predictors of Media Use for Voting Decision[a]

Predictor	Dem. & Pol.	+Med. Use	+Med. Dil.	+Rel.
Sex[b]	.08	.08	.08	.08
Age	-.11*	-.11*	-.12*	-.10
Education	-.07	-.08	-.09	-.08
Income	-.03	-.04	-.04	-.02
General Liberalism	.04	.03	.03	.03
Pol. Lib. (Party ID)	.00	-.00	-.00	-.01
Pol. Interest	.15***	.14**	.00	.03
Pol. Activity	.10	.09	.08	.10
Newspaper Use		.07	.05	.04
Television Use		.00	.01	-.01
Attention			.09	.09
Effort			.13*	.12
Rel. Liberalism				-.12*
Rel. Activity				-.11
Overall F	2.05	1.75	1.71	1.74
Significance	.04	.07	.07	.05
R^2	.064	.069	.080	.094
Adj. R^2	.033	.029	.033	.040

* $p \leq .1$
** $p \leq .05$
*** $p \leq .01$

[a] Entries are standardized regression coefficients.

[b] Dummy variable analysis was used to include sex. A positive value is associated with being female.

Concentration in Local Television Markets

by

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ABSTRACT

The degree of economic concentration in a market is affected by the precise definition of the market. Measuring concentration in media markets has been somewhat problematic in that media firms operate in a number of markets and also face competition from substitutes. This paper builds several alternative market definitions for local television, and shows that there are significant differences in measured concentration levels under those market definitions.

Concentration in Local Television Markets

The study of economic issues in media has experienced a resurgence in recent years, reflecting growing concerns about the perceived decline of the "marketplace of ideas." Media critics such as Bagdikian (1985, 1990) and Schiller (1981) have argued that market structures in information industries have become less competitive in recent years, granting not only economic power to those in the industries but, perhaps more importantly, political power through their control of the means of modern communication.

Scholars have responded to those concerns about diversity and economic power by embarking on a number of studies in recent years of both the levels and the effects of media market structure. Economists (cf. Scherer, 1970; Shepherd, 1970, 1979) take note of several elements of market structure, all of which can influence the operation of the market. The most commonly addressed are the horizontal elements of market share, concentration, and barriers to entry. There are also the elements of vertical integration and conglomeration which impact on market structures. All of these elements can significantly affect the performance of firms and the functioning of the marketplace.

Much of the more recent academic focus on the structure of media markets has been on the issue of basic levels of concentration. While there has seemingly been an emphasis on print industries (Busterna, 1988b; Compaine, 1979; Entman, 1985; Hirsch, 1985; Lacy, 1987; Picard, 1988; Picard, Winter, McCombs & Lacy, 1988) in recent years, there has also been some attention paid to various telecommunications industries (Compaine, 1979; Howard, 1986, 1990; Larson, 1980; McFadyen, Hoskins & Gillen, 1980; Noam, 1985; Prisuta, 1977; Wicks, 1989). In addition, there has been some research into issues of barriers to entry (Fournier &

Martin, 1983; Webbink, 1973; Wirth, 1985), conglomeration (Ferguson, 1983; Howard, 1974, 1990; Levin, 1985; Royal Commission on Newspapers, 1981) and vertical integration (Chan-Olmstead & Litman, 1988; Larson, 1980; Litman, 1979) in media markets and industries.

Most of this research has shared a basic approach of considering fairly narrow definitions of markets, and have used similar approaches for print and electronic media. Research, as well as continuing developments in technologies and the rise of new media, have raised the issue of what is the proper definition of the market and what factors need to be considered when examining levels of concentration and competition. Media markets are no longer neatly defined. New media have brought forth new competition, often creating very close substitutes for media products. Boundaries between old media are breaking down. Geographic boundaries overlap on a number of levels. What this suggests is that new approaches to the consideration of concentration are needed; that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the definition of markets, and that, perhaps, several alternative market definitions need to be considered simultaneously.

This paper proposes to consider the issues of defining markets and measuring levels of concentration for one basic media industry: broadcast television. The definition of markets will be based on two fundamental criteria: the fundamental economic issues related to concentration, and the policy issues related to levels of concentration. That is, it will consider both what the economists are concerned about when they define concentration, and what the media critics and policy-makers are interested in when they talk about the effects of concentration.

The Issues of Concentration

The principle policy issue related to perceived structural limits to competition in media is the question of power. Barriers to entry, horizontal and vertical integration, and conglomeration all are said to contribute to a concentration of economic power in the marketplace. The presence of such a concentration in a market suggests the potential for individuals or groups to somehow influence the conduct and performance of the marketplace, to impact its "normal" patterns of operation.

Media markets are somewhat distinctive in that the question of economic power has manifested itself in two distinctive policy arenas (U.S. House, 1981). On one hand, there is concern over the impact of concentration on economic conduct and performance, on pricing behavior, barriers to entry, and the limitation of output on issues of economic equity (cf. Ferguson, 1983; Simon, Primeaux & Rice, 1986; Wirth & Wollert, 1984). On the other hand, there is also concern over the impact of concentration on what could be termed the political and social conduct and performance of the market (cf. Bagdikian, 1990; Busterna, 1988a; Cherington, Hirsch & Brandwein, 1971; Hilliard & Picard, 1989; Picard et al., 1988; Prisuta, 1977). Principally, this latter concern has been the most pronounced in policy considerations, and is related to the idea that concentration may act to reduce the level of diversity in the "marketplace of ideas."

Media markets are also distinctive in that they actually operate in several markets simultaneously (Bates, 1987; Picard, 1989). This is particularly true in commercial broadcasting, where stations operate in one market trading programming for the attention of an audience, and in another market, selling that audience to advertisers (Bates, 1987). Some earlier studies have noted this fact, and have considered concentration in different markets (McFadyen et al., 1980). In fact, one can link these distinctive markets with the two basic arenas of policy concern. The concern over economic equity has focussed on considerations of the advertising market, while the concern over diversity and the "marketplace of ideas" places greater emphasis on the market for audience and the programming that attracts them.

Media markets can also be seen as operating on a number of geographic levels. Larson (1980) considered concentration in television at both the national and local level. He also looked not only at levels of concentration in broadcasting, but among broadcast advertisers. As noted above, McFadyen et al. (1980) noted the difference between the market for revenue (through time sales to advertisers and others) and the market for audiences, and measured concentration in Canadian broadcast markets separately for the two groups. Levy & Setzer (1984) considered concentration levels in the national video market under alternative definitions of the video marketplace (i.e., broadcast-only, broadcast+cable, etc.).

Economists, while placing an emphasis on market structure, also note that a key to any discussion of the effects of such structural factors on the marketplace and its performance is the careful definition of the specific market being examined. The definition of the marketplace under consideration can have a considerable impact on what is perceived as its structure. There are considerable differences, for example, in the structures of local and national markets for just about any good. Definitions of market are particularly important if the good(s) in question have close substitutes. The presence of close substitutes can expand the market considerably, resulting in lower levels of concentration.

What this suggests is that considerations of broadcast market structure need to be based on multiple definitions of markets, on separate considerations of audience markets and advertising markets, and the consideration of potential substitutes, and the development of measures which perhaps include consideration of close competitors. Levy & Setzer (1984) provide one such model for the video marketplace, expanding the market from broadcast outlets only, to including cable, subscription TV services, and multipoint distribution services. However, their analysis considers only the national market for video services. From a consumer perspective, however, markets are almost exclusively local. Levy & Setzer (1984) do address local markets somewhat, but only consider the number of local outlets, and not actual concentration levels.

Considerations of concentration in broadcasting to date have not met these needs. Most have essentially limited their consideration to the advertising market, focussing solely on commercial broadcasting outlets. Many have considered only national markets. Most have given no consideration to the availability and impact of potential substitutes. No one seems to have considered alternative measures of local concentration in television markets.

Measuring Concentration in Television Markets

Measuring concentration in local television markets requires the identification of both the market (a measure of the market) and a measure for concentration. A number of alternatives have been offered, and used, for both measures.

There have been a number of indexes developed since the 1950s in attempts to develop a summary measure of concentration. The four-firm concentration index appears to be the most commonly used measure of concentration in general industry studies (Shepherd, 1970, 1979). However, television is not an ordinary or a typical industry. As a result of the strict barriers to entry in the television industry, and the historical domination of affiliates of the three networks, there is actually very little variation to be found in the most commonly used concentration ratios (4-firm and 8-firm) in local television markets. Because of this lack of variability, and the fact that complete market information is generally available, other indexes, such as the Hirschman-Herfindahl index may be of greater use in considering variations in concentration measures (Shepherd, 1979; Stigler, 1983), particularly in broadcasting markets (McFadyen et al., 1980).[1]

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[1] The Hirschman-Herfindahl Index is computed by summing the squared value of the market shares of all of the firms in a market. By convention, the HHI uses shares rather than percentages, and thus ranges in value from 0 to 10000 rather than from 0 to 1.

The Hirschman-Herfindahl Index (HHI) provides a measure which varies from 0 to 10000, the latter representing a monopoly. But what do the index numbers mean, at what point is a market considered concentrated? Following guidelines proposed by Shepherd (1979), one could roughly identify markets with HHI > 1500 as tight oligopolies, and those with HHI < 1000 as loose oligopolies. The U.S. Department of Justice convention for considering mergers (cited in Levy & Setzer, 1984, p.209) suggests that HHI measures below 1000 reflect unconcentrated markets, while HHI measures above 1800 generally correspond to highly concentrated markets. As these guidelines do not vary too greatly, they suggest a general guideline for judging concentration in television markets: if the index falls below 1000, then the market is considered to be unconcentrated; if the index falls above 1800 it is considered to be highly concentrated; and if the index falls between 1000 and 1800, the market is considered somewhat concentrated. Because local media markets are widely considered to be very highly concentrated, a fourth category was proposed in order to provide better discrimination among "high" concentration levels. Thus, "high" concentration was redefined as having a HHI value between 1800 and 2750, and those markets with HHI greater than 2750 were considered to be very highly concentrated.

Since television operates in several markets and has, arguably, several close substitutes in each market, it was decided to develop several definitions of the television marketplace, and to calculate concentration measures for each market definition. The basic distinction made in this study was between the market for audience and the market for advertising. There are several key distinctions between the two markets. First, the market for audience includes broadcast outlets which do not carry advertising (such as public TV stations), and thus must be excluded from the market for advertising. Secondly, audience members may choose from all signals receivable by them, including signals which may not originate in the local market. Local advertisers, in contrast, are interested primarily in the local market, and thus normally restrict themselves to consideration of local outlets.

The first of the above differences raises the issue of substitutes. Audiences are concerned primarily with video signals, regardless of the delivery channel. In that sense, audiences may not make much of a distinction between regular broadcast television, cable, and alternative delivery systems such as home satellite dishes, low power television, multipoint delivery systems, etc; at least to the extent that such alternatives are available. In a similar vein, local advertisers seek audiences, regardless of the delivery system. Some delivery systems, though, might not be very close substitutes for video advertising messages. However, with the expansion of cable into the advertising arena, local television broadcasters are finding themselves facing a very close substitute in local cable systems, in terms of format if not reach. Other local advertising outlets (radio, print, direct mail, billboards, etc.) may also provide substitutes, although arguably not as close as cable. Problems facing the measuring of crossmedia competition, and the level of substitutes, preclude consideration of those alternatives within the confines of this paper.

These distinctions suggest the consideration of a number of distinctive market definitions. Clearly, the markets for audience and the markets for advertising should be considered separately. Within the market for audience, one might want to consider separately the markets for cable households and for non-cable households, as well as a combination measure.[2] This distinction could correspond to the traditional narrow market definition and an expanded definition including a close substitute, assuming that viewing patterns of cable and non-cable households are not too different. Similarly, the consideration of concentration in the market for advertising might well include one definition based on traditional narrow conceptualization of the marketplace (regular commercial stations only), and one incorporating a consideration of a close substitute (including cable).

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[2] One might ideally also like to isolate out those households for the various other alternative delivery systems, but penetration levels are quite low, and the source utilized for the data did not separate out those groups.

Methodology

The Hirschman-Herfindahl Index is based on the consideration of the market shares for all of the firms in the market. Thus, data needed to be gathered which could provide an indication of the market share for each television station or outlet, for the specific good considered. For the basic local market for audience, this was accomplished by utilizing estimates of the share of viewing attributed to qualified outlets in specific markets. This was measured by using the share of viewing (Mon-Sun, 6am-2am) reported in the May 1987 Arbitron ADI Viewing Allocation Report. Separate share estimates were recorded for cable and non-cable households. Other information, on cable penetration and number of viewing sources, were also collected from the Report. Concentration levels were then calculated independently from the cable and non-cable shares data. Total market concentration was defined as the weighted average of the cable and non-cable concentration measures, using the market cable penetration levels as the weighting factor.

Information on advertising shares in markets is not as readily available. Individual revenue data is considered proprietary, and advertising revenues are usually reported only as market totals. However, demand for advertising is based upon the expected audience for the message; thus one can construct advertising share measures based on an indicator of expected audience, or of general station reach. The Average Daily Circulation (ADC) measure provided by Arbitron Ratings does provide one such indicator of the relative audience reach for any station. Shares were determined by dividing any particular commercial outlet's ADC by the total market reach (defined as the sum of the commercial ADCs in the market).

While not providing a direct measure of advertising share, it does provide a reasonable estimate of relative audience reach, which is what advertisers buy.

Since cable systems have begun offering a close substitute for broadcast television advertising, it was decided to create a measure of concentration which would include cable as a commercial outlet in the market. It was decided, based in part on a cursory examination of ratings data, and the role played by cable, to treat cable as offering an alternative similar to that posed by an independent television station. That is, in markets with an independent station, cable was given a base ADC equal to that of the largest independent station. Since cable does not reach everywhere, the base ADC value was then corrected for the current cable penetration level in the market. In markets without independent stations, the base ADC for cable was set at a portion of the ADC for a network affiliate.[3] ADC data were gathered from the appropriate editions of the Television and Cable Factbook. Related information on the number and type of television outlets operating, cable penetration, and market size were also gathered from these and other industry sources.

Data were gathered and computed for all 213 Arbitron-defined television markets for the year 1987. In order to give an indication of changes in concentration levels over time, data was also gathered in order to calculate the concentration levels under the Advertising/Commercial only market definition in 1977.[4] Variations in market definitions and other missing values reduced the data set for some procedures. Further data manipulation and analysis was conducted using the STATA and SPSS-PC statistical routines on a personal computer.

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[3] Specifically, cable's base ADC was calculated as follows: in three station markets, 50% of the smallest ADC; in two station markets, 33% of the smallest ADC; in single station markets, 15% of the ADC of the existing station.

[4] Arguably, local cable advertising was not as prevalent, and not as close a substitute in 1977. Therefore, that definition was not considered for that period. Audience market definitions were not considered at this time due to the researcher's lack of access to the appropriate data at the time of this analysis.

Results and Analysis

Concentration levels were calculated for all local television markets under five alternative market definitions. A single definition was used to calculate concentration levels for a previous period for comparative purposes. Summary statistics for these various measures of concentration are provided in Table 1. As the HHI measure is based on the sum of squares, the presence of large share values has the potential to skew results somewhat. Therefore, the median value is given in addition to the mean and standard deviation.

[Table 1 about here]

The results presented in Table 1 do give some indication of the variability of concentration levels under alternative market definitions. Average, and median, concentration is lower in audience markets than in advertising markets. Broader market definitions (including substitutes) also have lower mean and median concentration. Average concentration also appears to have decreased over time. In addition, the lower standard deviation measures in audience markets (than in advertising markets) suggest that there is less variability among those markets' concentration levels. All of this suggests that there are considerable differences in concentration under the various market definitions.

To get a better indication of the nature of these differences, Pearson correlation coefficients were estimated between alternative market definitions. The results are given in Table 2. Unlike descriptive statistics of central tendency and dispersion, correlation indicates the degree to which variables co-vary. That is, it indicates the degree to which measures for the same market are related. For example, the correlations between the advertising market measures are all very high (above .9), indicating that while levels may vary, the basic structure measured under the definition is similar. This should not be surprising, as these market definitions are very similar, if not identical.

[Table 2 about here]

The fairly high correlations among the Audience market measures is not surprising. As the Total Market measure is constructed from the Cable and Non-cable measures, one would expect a high degree of correlation among those measures. The fairly high correlation between the Audience/Non-cable measure and the Advertising measures fits with the shared emphasis on broadcast signals. However, the generally lower correlations do indicate that there are distinct differences in the measures resulting from the different market definitions.

What was somewhat surprising was the low correlations of the Audience/Cable measure with other measures. There seemed to be virtually no relationship between the Audience/Cable measure of concentration and the Advertising measures. The correlations suggest that the Audience/Cable measure is actually measuring something completely different from what is measured by the Advertising measures. There is not even that much similarity between the Cable and Non-cable Audience market measures. The low correlation of the Audience/Cable measure with the others does account, however, for the lower correlations of the Audience/Total Market measure with the Advertising measures.

It should be specifically noted that the high correlation between the 1987 and the 1977 Advertising/Commercial measures suggest that, if one excludes the potential of close substitutes like cable, the basic economic structure of local television markets has not changed greatly, over time. On the other hand, the very low correlation of the Audience/Cable measure with other concentration measures, especially the Advertising market measures, suggest that cable is significantly changing the structure of the marketplace.

Concentration, while it is measured in continuous terms, tends to be dealt with in more categorical terms. Concentration studies tend to focus more on whether a market is concentrated or not, or how many markets are concentrated, than on more precise measures. As noted above, there are some standard categories of concentration which can be used to differentiate markets. As those distinctions are often used in concentration research, those categorical levels were applied to the various measures defined in this study. The results of that procedure are given in Tables 3 and 4.

[Table 3 about here]

Table 3 gives the numbers of markets which fall into each basic level of concentration under the various market definitions. The results tend to support the general descriptive statistics as well. Audience market measures tend to have more markets falling into lower levels than Advertising market measures. Broader market definitions (those including cable) tend to show more markets falling into lower levels.

Of particular note, however, is the fact that under the Audience/Cable definition, only 9 local television markets could be considered to be highly concentrated. This result runs counter to the conventional wisdom that media markets, including television, are highly concentrated. Conventional wisdom is supported by the other measures, under which the majority of markets are classified highly concentrated or very highly concentrated. In fact, it is only the Audience/Cable market definition that yields measured concentration levels in the "low" range for any market.

Television markets are not all the same size. Thus, many considerations of concentration levels also examine the proportion of total population under each level of concentration. The results of Table 3 were transformed by weighting each market by its size to yield estimates of the total national audience which fell under each of the four levels of concentration. The results of that transformation are given in Table 4. The results follow, for the most part, those discussed above.

[Table 4 about here]

There are a few interesting differences, however. First, the shift in levels of concentration from 1977 to 1987, for the Advertising/Commercial measure, seem proportionally greater, indicating that higher concentration levels tend to be found in the smaller markets. Another interesting result was the fact that the Advertising/Commercial plus cable measure had a greater percentage of population in the moderate concentration level than did the Audience/Non-cable measure. Also, the percentage of population in low concentration markets under the Audience/Cable definition is proportionally less than the percentage of markets. This suggests that not only is concentration in Advertising markets inversely related to market size, but that the relationship is not as strong or as uniform in Audience markets.

As this study calculated concentration measures for all local television markets, it technically constitutes a census, and thus all differences are real and significant. However, the data used for those calculations are all estimates, and thus incorporate a degree of error. Therefore, it was decided to also use statistical tests for determining the significance of any differences between alternative market definitions and measures.

[Table 5 about here]

Table 5 provides the results of the pairwise comparisons of concentration measures, using the pairwise t-test. All of the comparisons were in the expected direction, and were statistically significant at a level of $p < .0001$. The data thus confirmed the earlier suggestions that concentration has declined over time, that Audience markets were less concentrated than Advertising markets, and that broadening market definitions to include close substitutes reduced concentration.

[Table 6 about here]

Table 6 shifts the consideration of differences from differences in individual markets to the consideration of whether different definitions and measures affects perception of the general degree of concentration across markets. Specifically, it considers whether there are differences in the breakdowns of markets by concentration level for different measures, using the results of Table 3 and a chi-square test. The results tend to support the general conclusion that there are significant differences among the market definitions and measures which can affect perceptions of levels of concentration. One comparison, between the Commercial and Commercial plus cable definitions of the Advertising market, was only marginally significant ($p = .076$, 2 *df*). All other comparisons were statistically significant at a level of $p < .0001$.

Conclusions

With the increase in the concern among both researchers and policy-makers about the degree of competition in media industries and media markets, it is becoming increasingly important to obtain accurate and valid measures of the degree of concentration. The nature of media markets and media industries, however, raises questions about the usefulness of standard, narrow definitions. This has been particularly true for considerations of concentration in the broadcasting industry, which has arguably placed too much emphasis on national markets and too little emphasis on substitutes.

Therefore, this study has considered the issues raised in the consideration of concentration in local television markets. The nature of television as an industry indicated that there were two separate, distinctive markets in which local broadcasters operate: the market for audience, and the market for advertising. Measures were defined for both basic types of markets, and applied to a census of American television markets. An examination of the results indicated that there were important differences in the two market definitions. The market for audience was generally less concentrated. The data also suggested that while the measured concentration levels were somewhat related (see Table 2), there was also a degree of independence. All told, the data suggested that the two markets, and the levels of concentration in the markets, were distinctive, and somewhat independent.

The study also considered the question of substitutes for local television. Cable was arguably a substitute for local television in either market, so alternative measures were derived for market definitions which included cable, as well as for the simple television only definitions. Examination of the resulting measures confirmed what economic theory would predict, that the presence of substitutes lowers concentration levels in any market. The difference in measured concentration was found to be generally significant.

What these results suggest is that concentration measures in local broadcasting markets are extremely sensitive to the precise definition of the market. Thus, this study indicates that research into levels of broadcast competition need to pay much more serious attention to the definition of the marketplace, as that definition may well make a significant difference in the levels of concentration revealed, and potentially might make similar differences in other measures. Researchers, and policy-makers, in considering concentration and other measures, need to be careful in specifying just what markets they are examining, and whether or not there are any reasonable substitutes for the primary good of the market.

For example, while researchers interested in the impact of concentration on the price of advertising would clearly be interested in the market for advertising, it would be inappropriate to use the same market definition to consider the impact of concentration on diversity in the "marketplace of ideas," on the number of voices available in the market. To do so would be to seriously overestimate the degree of concentration. Similarly, in an era of rapidly converging media technologies, and the equally rapid development and diffusion of alternatives to mainstream media, it is becoming increasing important to consider the presence and impact of substitutes. All of this suggests that greater care needs to be taken when considering concentration in future studies.

The data also suggest that contrary to some allegations, concentration in local television markets are declining over time. This is undoubtedly due in large part to the increase in the number of broadcast outlets in recent years. And if one considers the increasing diffusion of alternatives which are increasingly being seen as viable substitutes for traditional television broadcast stations, the decrease in concentration levels is even greater and more significant.

There was one other finding of note in this study: the distinctiveness of the Audience/Cable concentration measure. As noted in Table 2, this measure was not highly correlated with other indicators of concentration, especially those based on Advertising market definitions. This suggests that the presence of cable, and the release that cable brings from the limitations on the number of broadcast signals imposed by the FCC and local market economics, has brought about a structurally different market. Cable, it could be said, has succeeded in removing the artificial barriers to entry which has kept concentration levels in television high. Further research is needed to investigate what this data suggests about the impact of cable on broadcast markets.

All in all, this study has raised a number of implications for further research into the political economics of media. The distinctiveness of the Audience/Cable market definition indicates that cable has the potential for drastically transforming the video media marketplace, a potential that is being realized as cable continues to grow. The general differences between market definitions and the levels of concentration that emerge under them indicate the growing need to more carefully and explicitly consider just what media markets are, and just what impacts or effects are being considered. The rapid changes in media and media markets only reinforce this need for further research on the impact of substitutes on levels of consentration.

What this all suggests is that, while concentration and degree of competition in media markets are still a major concern, changes need to be made in how research addressed those concerns. This study argues that several distinctive markets are at work in the broadcasting industry, and that substitutes are increasing. Concentration in local television markets was measured under several alternative market definitions, and found that there were significant differences in the levels of concentration indicated. Therefore, greater care needs to be taken in future research to make sure that appropriate definitions and measures are utilized when considering concentration and levels of media market concentration.

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Table 1

Concentration in Local Television Markets under Alternative Market Definitions.

Market Definition	M	SD	Median
Audience Market (1987)			
Total Market	**1861.7**	**411.7**	**1802**
Non-cable (broadcast only)	**2636.4**	**780.0**	**2447**
Cable (inc. broadcast)	**1302.1**	**271.4**	**1291**
Advertising Market (1987)			
Commercial broadcast only	**4118**	**2422.6**	**3234**
Commercial broadcast plus cable	**3596.6**	**1995.9**	**2842**
Advertising Market (1977)			
Commercial broadcast only	**4913.3**	**2693.0**	**3548**

Table 2.

Correlations among Concentration Measures

	Correlation with				
Concentration Measure	87TM	87NC	87C	87CM	87CC
1987 Audience					
Total Market (87TM)					
Non-cable (87NC)	.819				
Cable (87C)	.667	.333			
1987 Advertising					
Commercial (87CM)	.264	.527	.014		
Comm. + Cable (87CC)	.301	.549	.031	.997	
1977 Advertising					
Commercial (77CM)	.277	.548	.041	.915	.914

Table 3.

Levels of Concentration Across Local Television Markets

	Concentration Index Levels (HHI)			
Type of Market	<1000	1000-1800	1800-2750	>2750
Audience Market (1987)				
Total Market Concentration	0	105	101	7
Non-cable (Broadcast only)	0	18	119	76
Cable (inc. broadcast)	22	182	8	1
Advertising Market (1987)				
Commercial broadcast only	0	5	67	136
Commercial broadcast plus cable	0	11	81	116
Advertising Market (1977)				
Commercial broadcast only	0	2	28	181

Note: The categories correspond with low, moderate, high, and very high levels of concentration.

Table 4.

Proportions of National Audience Under Various Concentration Levels

	Level of Concentration			
Type of Market	Low	Mod.	High	Very High
Audience Market (1987)				
Total Market Concentration	0%	67.2%	32.1%	0.8%
Non-cable (Broadcast only)	0%	23.7%	64.5%	11.8%
Cable (inc. broadcast)	4.7%	94.3%	1.0%	0.1%
Advertising Market (1987)				
Commercial broadcast only	0%	20.8%	52.4%	26.8%
Commercial broadcast plus cable	0%	29.3%	52.3%	18.4%
Advertising Market (1977)				
Commercial broadcast only	0%	14.1%	37.6%	48.3%

Note. The categories correspond with HHI indeces of <1000, 1000-1800, 1800-2750, and >2750. Proportions may not total 100% due to rounding.

Table 5.

Differences Between Market Definitions:
Pairwise Comparison of Measured Market Concentration.

Comparison	t	df	p
1987 Audience Markets Non-cable vs Cable	26.83	212	.000
1987 Advertising Markets Commc'l vs Commc'l + cable	16.29	207	.000
1987 Commercial vs Non-cable	10.22	207	.000
1987 Commercial + cable vs Cable	16.56	207	.000
1987 Commercial vs Total market	13.92	207	.000
1977 Commercial vs 1987 Commercial	10.03	207	.000

Table 6.

Differences Between Market Definitions:
Comparisons of Concentration Levels Across Markets.

Comparison	Chi-Sq.	df	p
1987 Audience Markets Non-cable vs Cable	326.5	3	.000
1987 Advertising Markets Commc'l vs Commc'l + cable	5.2	2	.076
1987 Non-cable vs. Commercial	38.8	2	.000
1987 Cable vs Commercial + cable	346.4	3	.000
1987 Total Market vs Commercial	214.1	2	.000
1987 Commercial vs 1977 Commercial	23.7	2	.000
Note: The lowest level was dropped from comparisons when neither market definition had any markets falling in that category.			

The In-Depth Coverage and Commentary in Local Television News

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The In-depth Coverage and Commentary in Local Television News

INTRODUCTION

In 1947 the Hutchins Commission concluded that freedom of the press was in danger in the United States. The commission listed three reasons: the number of press outlets was declining; those who owned and ran the press were not doing an adequate job serving the public; and some of those controlling the press had engaged in activities condemned by society.[1] The concentration in the newspaper industry that so concerned the Hutchins Commission has continued to the point where fewer than two dozen cities have separately owned and operated newspapers and another 20 have joint operating agreements.[2] This concentration was seen as a threat to the press's fulfilling the five goals listed by the commission.[3] The Hutchins Commission, however, issued its report before the development of television as a news medium. As the daily newspaper industry has become more concentrated, the television news industry has become less so. It is not unusual for a city with only one newspaper to have three or more television stations with local news coverage. The purpose of this study is to explore the performance of local television news in contributing to the marketplace of ideas.

Specifically, the study will address two areas of news and editorial coverage mentioned in the Hutchins report: in-depth coverage and commentary. The in-depth coverage relates to responsibility of news media to present news in a context that gives it meaning. The commentary relates to the responsibility to act as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism.[4]

LITERATURE REVIEW

A basic assumption this study makes is that the provision by local television news of in-depth coverage and commentary -- a contribution to the marketplace of ideas and public service -- increases the quality of local television news. And though little research exists dealing directly with television in-depth coverage and commentary, the literature contains several studies related to the role local television news plays in serving the public and the issue of quality of local television news content, either in the context of political coverage or sensational content. Much of the evidence suggests that the local television news industry is failing in its role of public servant. The studies on the political effects of media imply a lack of depth available in political coverage from television news, certainly less than in newspapers. For example, Becker and his colleagues[5] found evidence that audience members who rely on television for news and information have less knowledge of local public affairs than those who rely on newspapers. They explained their finding by suggesting that newspapers are more likely to focus on issues, television news on events and personalities. Clarke and Fredin suggest that newspapers are superior to television when it comes to helping people learn about political affairs.[6]

More recently research on the content of television political coverage has discovered some stations have fallen short when it comes to providing information about local and state races. Ostroff and Sandell first found that stations in two Ohio markets did little to cover local or statewide races with their own staffs.[7] A continuation of their research showed that despite technological changes and changes in news practices over the years, coverage continued to be sporadic and inadequate. A possible explanation for their finding, the researchers said, was the imposition of entertainment values on television journalism.[8]

Smith learned that some television journalists themselves -- particularly reporters -- indicate their product lacks journalistic substance.[9] Would self-awareness, then, lead to change? Not likely, considering Smith's study also indicated that news directors believed no changes were necessary.[10] These findings are revealing, but still do not provide evidence that the perceptions are accurate.

Even the evidence that could supply conclusions about the substantiality of local television news is contradictory. The research is based on the oft-stated assertion that entertainment values are crowding out news values in television news, a notion that receives occasional support, but also lacks support in some research.

Ryu's study of the Cincinnati market suggested that stations would carry less sensational/human interest news and more public affairs news in an election year than in non-election years. The data support the hypothesis, leading the researcher to suggest that stations' sensationalistic or human interest stories serve as reserves to maintain ratings.[11]

A study of the New York City market had different results. The content analysis of Eyewitness News by Dominick, Wurtzel and Lometti showed the station using the format did not spend more time on feature coverage and less on hard news as critics had suggested. The data did show, however, that Eyewitness News used more violent, human interest and comic materials than stations using other formats.[12]

Studies in other markets have similar findings. Newscasts from ten Pennsylvania stations emphasized local politics, not sensational or human interest stories.[13] In San Diego, newscasts were devoted more to "significant issue" than anything else.[14] And in Houston, sensational news did not dominate local television and, in fact, contained elements of quality and usefulness for viewers, including background and reference to the political process.[15]

Why the conflicting results? One reason, we believe, is imposing the notion of sensationalism to provide the conceptual framework for the research. Regardless of the study, researchers seem to presume that the entertainment values inherent in the so-called "sensational" stories crowd out conventional news values, and consequently substance, for the purpose of ratings. We would argue that sensationalism is a concept that addresses content form and presentation, not substance. The substance of a story and the newscast in which it appears, we believe, has more to do with the amount of time devoted to the story than with story presentation.

In this study we address the issue of substance or context in local television news by looking at two variables: in-depth coverage (when a station carried a series of stories about the same subject on consecutive nights or when it carried more than one story about the same subject on the same night) and the existence of editorials or commentaries (when a station clearly indicated that the material presented was the viewpoint of the station management, a station employee, or an individual or group outside the station). We have included editorials and commentaries in the analysis because they potentially provide differing points of views on issues, a situation that would indicate the existence of a forum for the exchange of ideas.[16]

The study addresses four research questions:

1. How extensive is in-depth coverage provided by local television news departments?
2. What geographic areas are emphasized in this coverage?
3. How extensive is commentary provided by local television news departments?
4. What geographic areas are emphasized in this coverage?

The extent and geographic emphasis of local TV news in-depth coverage and commentary is a concern because it has to do with the degree to which television may act as a complement or substitute for newspapers in providing such information. It is not assumed here that local TV news will replace newspapers; rather the concern is whether they are acting as additional voices, which are important in the absence of competing newspapers. The geographic emphasis is important because newspapers tend to be locally oriented in their coverage and content. If local television news departments are providing in-depth coverage and commentary about national and international issues, it may be at the cost of local coverage, which in the absence of competing newspapers is more important to local audience. The three major networks and CNN can provide the national and international coverage.

METHOD

This research examined local television news in Michigan and Oregon. The stations studied here are a non-probability sample because scripts and tapes of the local newscasts had to be used. Within these states, the stations in Detroit and Portland were selected. Stations in Lansing and Alpena, Michigan, and Eugene and Bend, Oregon, were also selected. This sample provided local news from large, medium and small markets.[17]

Because of limited taping facilities, some newscasts were taped, while others were analyzed by using scripts. Of the seven Michigan stations and eight Oregon stations, only the Alpena station was dropped because it failed to send scripts.

The early evening newscasts were studied for all of the stations, except two. These independent stations only had newscasts at 10 p.m. The early evening newscasts were used because this was the period that stations offer expanded newscasts, the early evening newscasts generally have larger audiences, and most stations consider the early evening newscast their cornerstone newscast.

All weekday newscasts were studied during a two-week period from November 30 to December 11, 1987. The only unusual news event during this period was the visit of Mikhail Gorbachev to the United States, which took place during the first few days of the second week.

The content in two Portland and all four Detroit newscasts was analyzed using video tape, while the content of two stations in Portland and all stations in Eugene, Bend and Lansing was analyzed using scripts provided by the stations. Short portions of the closing stories from one Detroit and two

Portland stations were not recorded because of timing problems with the video recorders. This did not effect the story count. Estimates of the story lengths were based on the average lengths of these newscasts.

A more serious problem arose with the use of scripts in three of the six small- and medium-markets stations. The absence of story times in the scripts made it impossible to estimate times of stories and newsholes for these stations. All large-market stations had times for stories, either from tapes or on the scripts.

Stories were categorized on the basis of locale of story, whether the story was an in-depth story, and whether the story was commentary, hard news or soft news. Locale of story was categorized as central city of area of dominant influence (ADI), central county of area of dominant influence, ADI outside of central county, state, regional, national, or international.[18] Stories were in-depth if two or more stories were about the same event or issue. These stories could be on the same night or on different nights if the stories spread over more than one night were presented as being part of a series. Commentary stories or editorials were identified as such by the stations.

The story length was determined from the first word of an introduction until the last word of a story and was recorded in seconds. The total newshole was determined by adding the length of all of the stories. This excluded the promotions before breaks and any exchange among journalists not related to stories.

Two sets of two coders each were used, with one analyzing tapes and the other scripts. Intercoder reliability was determined separately. Each had two reliability checks of a newscast before coding began. In the first reliability check for the script coders, agreement was 76 percent for locale, 96 percent for in-depth stories and 88 percent for commentary. The second reliability check dealt only with locale and commentary. Agreement was 84 percent for locale and 84 percent for commentary.

The first reliability check for the tape coders included three coders because original plans called for three coders to be used for tapes. However, only two analyzed the tapes. The percent of agreement for the categories was 87 percent for locale, 85 percent for in-dpeth stories and 81 percent for commentary. The second check included only the two coders who actually coded the tapes. The percentage of agreement was 94 percent for locale, 88 percent for in-dpeth stories and 88 percent for commentary.

Tape coding required timing of the stories. The two coders who coded the tapes both timed the same 23 stories and average 1.57 seconds difference. Since the stories averaged 69.4 seconds, the difference represented a disagreement of 2 percent, which was acceptable. Scripts with times had the times explicitly listed, and a reliability test for length in scripts was not necessary.

Because some differences have been found in coverage provided by stations in different market sizes, the stations here were divided into large and small markets. Large included stations in Detroit and Portland. Small markets included all others. The term small here is one of convenience because two of the markets usually are listed as medium-size markets.

RESULTS

The first research question asked how extensive in-depth coverage was by the local television news departments. Seven of the eight large-markets and four of six small-market stations carried in-depth stories during the two weeks studied. The seven large-market stations that carried in-depth stories averaged 16 such stories per week. This accounted for 12.2 percent of all stories and 17.3 percent of their newshole. The average for all eight stations was 10.2 percent of all stories and 10.2 percent of the newshole. The four small stations that carried in-depth news averaged five such stories per week. This accounted for only 7 percent of all stories. Slightly more than 5 percent of the newshole at the two small stations which had times on their scripts was devoted to in-depth coverage. The overall average for all small stations was 4.2 percent of all stories.

Table 1 presents data that answers the second research question, which concerns geographic emphasis of in-depth stories. While the large-market stations had more in-depth stories, the smaller stations were more likely to devote such coverage to the ADI in which the station was located. The large-market stations devoted less of their in-depth time to the local ADI than they did their other types of news stories. The majority of their in-depth coverage (almost 63 percent) emphasized national and international news. The smaller stations devoted 45 percent of their 40 in-depth stories to their ADI, but this was less than the 55.9 percent of other news stories devoted to the ADI.

The heavy tendency for large-market stations to cover national and foreign news in-depth was partially due to the visit of Gorbachev. Table 2 breaks down the two weeks of the study. During the week before his visit, the stations devoted 36.5 percent of the in-depth coverage to their ADI, 19 percent to state and regional news and 44.5 percent to national and international news. During the week of Gorbachev's visit, 71.6 percent of the large-market in-depth stories were devoted to national and international events. However, even before his visit, only a little more than a third of the in-depth stories were devoted to the station's ADI.

The third research question asked about the extent of commentary at these stations. Six of the eight large-market and four of the six small-market stations carried commentary during these two weeks. The large-market stations averaged two commentaries per week, which accounted for 1.6 percent of all stories. They average 175 seconds of commentary per week, which accounted for 1.9 percent of their newshole. The four small-market stations averaged 2.4 commentaries per week, which accounted for about 2.7 percent of their stories. The two small-market stations that had time on their scripts gave about 2.6 percent of their newshole to commentaries.

Table 3 answers the fourth research question, which concerns locale addressed in the stations' commentaries. Two-thirds of the large-market commentaries were about the ADI in which the stations were located, which was higher than the percentage of other news stories devoted to the ADI. In the small-markets, 57.8 percent of the 19 commentaries were about the ADI, which was almost equal to the percentage for other news stories.

DISCUSSION

It is difficult to evaluate the extent of coverage without some standard or baseline. No previous study of local TV news is available for comparison, but a study of newspapers is.[19] The study of content in 114 newspapers from 1984 found that .95 percent of the news section in large newspapers was devoted to in-depth coverage, compared to .56 percent for medium and .28 percent for small newspapers. It is difficult to transpose newspaper news space into television news time, but a comparison with the newspapers study indicates that at least large-market local TV news departments are devoting an extensive proportion of their time to in-depth coverage.

The same newspaper study looked at the percentage of the news-editorial space given to commentary. Commentary was considered all columns, letters, cartoons and editorials on the editorial and op-ed pages. The large newspapers gave 9.82 percent to commentary, while the medium papers devoted 8.58 percent and small newspapers devoted 9.37 percent. This is considerably more than the 1.9 percent of large-TV station newsholes and 2.6 percent of small-TV station newsholes devoted to commentary in the present study.

The purpose of this study was to explore how well local television news might be contributing to the functions of journalism expressed by the Hutchins Commission. It appears that the Michigan and Oregon stations studied here are contributing to context through their in-depth coverage. Large-market stations were devoting more time than their smaller-market counterparts, but both were making some contribution. However, the tendency of the large-market stations was to devote less than half of this coverage to the local ADI. This could cause some concern because it is the local market, which tends to have only one newspaper, that needs more coverage. National and international issues are covered by network, national newspapers and news magazines.

The local stations appear to be making some contribution to context through in-depth coverage, but their contributions to the exchange of comment and criticism was much less, especially when compared to the proportion of newspaper space given commentary. It appears that local television news departments could expand the number of commentaries per week. Still, despite the limited number of commentaries, the commentaries were more likely to address local issues than were the in-depth stories.

Overall, this limited study offers some hope that television news can help ease the limited access to the information market created by the decline of newspaper competition. The contribution, however, is currently not as extensive as it might be.

This study is limited in generalizability by its purposive sample. The time period, which included Gorbachev's visit, also limits the findings. Further, the study looked only at time and stories and did not examine the nature of the content. The findings, though, are enough to warrant further examination of the role that local television news can play in fulfilling the information needs of people in single-newspaper markets.

ENDNOTES

[1] The Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press: A General Report on Mass Communication: Newspapers, Radio, Motion Pictures, Magazines and Books (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947).

[2] John C. Busterna, "Trends in Daily Newspaper Ownership," Journalism Quarterly, 65:831-838 (Winter 1988).

[3] The Commission on Freedom of the Press, op. cit., pp. 20-29.

[4] Ibid., pp. 21-25.

[5] Lee B. Becker, Idowu A. Sobawale and William E. Casey Jr., "Newspaper and Television Dependencies: Effects on Evaluations of Public Officials," Journal of Broadcasting, 23:465-475 (Fall 1979).

[6] Peter Clarke and Eric Fredin, "Newspapers, Television and Political Reasoning," Public Opinion Quarterly, 42:143-160 (Summer 1978).

[7] David H. Ostroff and Karin Sandell, "Local Station Coverage of Campaigns: A Tale of Two Cities in Ohio," Journalism Quarterly, 61:346-351 (Summer 1984).

[8] David H. Ostroff and Karin L. Sandell, "Campaign Coverage by Local TV News in Columbus, Ohio, 1978-1986," Journalism Quarterly, 66:114-120 (Spring 1989).

[9] Conrad Smith, "News Critics, Newsworkers and Local Television News," Journalism Quarterly, 65:341-346 (Summer 1988).

[10] Ibid.

[11] Jung S. Ryu, "Public Affairs and Sensationalism in Local TV News Programs," Journalism Quarterly, 59:74-78, 137 (Spring 1982).

[12] Joseph Dominick, Alan Wurtzel and Guy Lometti, "Television Journalism vs. Show Business: A Content Analysis of Eyewitness News," Journalism Quarterly, 52:213-218 (Summer 1975).

[13] William C. Adams, "Local Public Affairs Context of TV News," Journalism Quarterly, 55:690-695 (Winter 1978).

[14] K. Tim Wulfemeyer, "A Content Analysis of Local Television Newscasts: Answering the Critics," Journal of Broadcasting, 481-486 (Winter 1982).

[15] C. Richard Hofstetter and David M. Dozier, "Useful News, Sensational News: Quality, Sensationalism and Local TV News," Journalism Quarterly, 63:815-820, 853 (Winter 1986).

[16] Previous studies on the existence of editorials in local television news -- all involving surveys of local stations -- showed more than half of the respondent stations said they did editorials, stations in large markets tend to editorialize to greater extent than stations in small markets, and local issues tend to comprise the content of the editorials more so than other issues. See Frank Wolf, Television Programming for News and Pubic Affairs, (New York: Praeger, 1972); Irving E. Fang and John W. Whelen, "Survey of TV Editorials and Ombudsmen Segments," Journal of Broadcasting, 17:363-371 (Summer 1973); and Milan D. Meeske, "Editorial Practices of Television Stations," Journalism Quarterly, 55:750-754 (Winter 1978).

[17] The following stations were studied: Detroit stations included WDIV, WJBK, WKBD, WXYZ; Lansing area stations included WLNS and WILX; the Alpena station, WBKB, at first agreed to send scripts and then declined; Portland stations included KATU, KGW, KOIN and KPTV; Eugene area stations included KEZI, KMTR, KVAL; the Bend station was KTVZ.

[18] Locale of story was determined by the location affected by the events or issues. Thus, a story from Lansing, Michigan, about the formal activities of the state Legislature would be classified as state.

[19] Stephen Lacy and James M. Bernstein, "Daily Newspaper Content's Relationship to Publication Cycle and Circulation Size," Newspaper Research Journal, 49-57 (Spring 1988).

TABLE 1

The Locale of In-depth Coverage for Large- and Small-Market Stations

	Large Market		Small Market	
	In-depth	Other	In-Depth	Other
Locale				
Within ADI	28.5 %	52.0 %	45.0 %	55.9 %
State & Regional	8.8	19.0	22.5	29.6
National International	62.7	29.0	32.5	14.5
Number of Cases	225	1,849	40	955

Cramer's V for large-market story distribution = .22.

Cramer's V for small-market story distribution = .10.

Cramer's V for comparing large and small in-depth story distribution = .24.

TABLE. 2

The Locale of In-depth Coverage for Large-Market Stations in the Week Before and During Gorbachev's U.S. Visit

	Week Before Visit		Week of Visit	
	In-depth	Other	In-depth	Other
Locale				
Within ADI	36.5 %	52.4 %	24.5 %	51.4%
State & Regional	19.0	19.4	3.9	18.4
National International	44.5	28.2	71.6	30.2
Number of Cases	74	980	151	869

Cramer's V for before week story distribution = .09.

Cramer's V for during week story distribution = .31.

Cramer's V for comparing before and during visit in-depth story distribution = .29.

TABLE 3

The Locale of Commentary for Large- and Small-Market Stations

	Large Market		Small Market	
	Commentary	Other	Commentary	Other
Locale				
Within ADI	66.6 %	49.3 %	57.8 %	55.3 %
State & Regional	4.2	18.0	21.1	29.5
National International	29.2	32.7	21.1	15.2
Number of cases	24	2,050	19	936

Cramer's V for large-market story distribution = .08.

Cramer's V for small-market story distribution = .03.

Cramer's V for comparing large- and small-market commentary distribution = .29.